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MAP OF SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT

AND SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND
Swamp Yankee from Mystic

By James H. Allyn
I don’t suppose anyone in America has ever written the story of their family going back twelve or more generations, faults and all. There are no dukes or earls in the far background, no war heroes, no famous politicians, and least of all no millionaires.

They were the first settlers in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and upper New York State. They broke the prairie in Illinois, cleared the forest in Wisconsin, sailed their small ships to the West Indies and the Old World, and fished the East Coast to Labrador. If there was one thing they had in common, it was that they spoke their minds whatever the consequences, and tried to do what was right.

This is not the story of ancestors as found in the usual family histories. Nor is it the tale of our early history as told in approved history books. It is of people who had principles and prejudices, initiative and insecurity, ambitions and doubts, a silk umbrella and smelly feet.
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SWAMP YANKEE

Mystic is now a community of about 8,000 people lying on either side of a small tidal river of the same name in southeastern Connecticut. Mystic is little more than a name, with a loyalty peculiar unto itself. It is not even a town, although Mystic was in the early days when it ran from the middle of Groton over as far as Weekapaug in Rhode Island, but that was when it was claimed by Massachusetts. Now it is partly in Groton and partly in Stonington. In the days of wooden ships the name Mystic was known around the world. Shipping and shipbuilding made modest fortunes for a few families, whose white clapboard houses were scarcely distinguishable from those who built the ships.

While Mystic itself was settled by orthodox members of the Congregational Church, the eastern part of the original town was settled by members of the Seventh-Day Baptist Church from Newport, Rhode Island, themselves a branch of Roger Williams' Baptists at Providence Plantations. They were all a contentious lot, a continuous source of irritation to the leaders of Church and State in Hartford, the Connecticut capital. It was they, apparently, who first used the derisive term Swamp Yankee; now claimed with edgy pride by descendents of the original settlers, about whom this story is concerned. Most of them belonged to the working class, which was sharply defined in those days. A few were "gentlemen," educated in England and Holland.

Beyond an independence of spirit and a resentment of authority, there is little to distinguish a Swamp Yankee today. One recognizes another by a local accent and choice of words. Like the Maine accent with which it has similarities, it was handed down in semi-isolation for many generations, but is impossible to accurately imitate. There is no "r" at the end of a syllable. They say "hahba" for harbor. "I" is pronounced something like "oi." There often seem to be extra syllables in a word. "Trees" comes out "tree-uhs"; Stonington was pronounced "StunVton"; Norwich as "Norrich" and even earlier "Norridge," as it was sometimes spelled. When I was a boy, some still said "hinsn" and "hern." The word "on" was used in place of "of." Such expressions have now disappeared, thanks to earnest schoolteachers, and more recently radio announcers, but the "tune" survives.

PLYMOUTH COLONY IN NEW ENGLAND

Who has not heard of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock in the winter of 1620. This little band has been so idealized in stories for schoolchildren that we think of them today as saintly, grim-faced zealots. In fact they were typical Elizabethans of the working class, farmers and small tradesmen. They used "strong waters" and beer. Only on
the Sabbath did they dress in black or gray, assuming that they had a change of clothes. Ordinarily, like other Englishmen of the time, they wore brown or perhaps Lincoln green, as long as their English clothes held out. About one third of them were Puritans, and called themselves “Saints.” The rest, shopkeepers from London and farmers from Kent, were called “Strangers.” Only a few of the leaders had a college education. Too often the Plymouth Pilgrims are confused with the strict Puritans who came to Boston ten years later.

The Puritans in England were more a political party than a church. Henry VIII had been excommunicated by the Church of Rome. He made use of the situation to seize the church’s immense wealth, but made little attempt at church reform. His newly established Church of England was as mercenary as the old church. He never considered himself as either a Separatist or Protestant. The first Puritans wanted only to “purify” the church and state, even as Martin Luther did sixty years before in Germany.

**WILLIAM BREWSTER.** In 1575 Archbishop Grindal of York held in the name of the Church of England many large estates all over the country. Among them was Scrooby Manor in Nottinghamshire. He appointed as Bailiff William Brewster, Sr. [13] to act as Magistrate, collect the rents and perform other duties. In addition, Brewster was named Post Master, which involved overseeing the horse relays on the Manor’s section of the Great North Road which ran from London to Scotland. The next year Grindal was elevated to Archbishop of Canterbury, and Edwin Sandys took over York. Sandys was to remain a friend and patron of the Brewsters for many years. The Brewsters were threatened with eviction shortly after, not by Sandys, but by Queen Elizabeth. She wanted the Manor house for a hunting lodge, but was persuaded that the house was in too ruinous a condition to justify the expense of rebuilding it. Parts of the house were then several hundred years old.

William Brewster, Jr. [12] was born in the area in 1566. In 1580 his father sent him to Peterhouse, Cambridge University. The Puritan reformers were most active there, and some of them under Robert Browne established a Separatist Church. Young Brewster became a disciple, but not at that time a member. He did not graduate, but went into the service of William Davidson, Clerk of the Privy Council. They went over to the Netherlands in 1584, where Davidson was to secure collateral for the very substantial loan Elizabeth made to the States General; the Protestant government which had broken away from Spanish rule. Young Brewster liked to tell afterward that he kept the keys to the City of Flushing under his pillow. On their return to London Brewster had a chance to see Walter Raleigh, Francis Drake and other heroes of the time, and become acquainted with the operation of government from the inside. This was the man who in later life became the spiritual leader of the Pilgrims at Plymouth.

One of Queen Elizabeth’s biggest problems was what to do with Catholic Mary Stuart, her cousin. She had been kept prisoner for several years and became implicated in a plot to assassinate Elizabeth and take the throne herself. Realizing the critical nature of the situation, Elizabeth finally agreed to have Mary executed, and in 1590 so informed
Davidson. He issued the order and the deed was done. Elizabeth, filled with remorse, said Davidson had exceeded his authority, and imprisoned him in the Tower for two years. Brewster returned to Scrooby and took over his father’s job as Post Master. To show his loyalty to Davidson, Brewster visited him several times in the Tower, at the risk of future employment. He married Mary Love [12], and their son Jonathan [11] was born in 1593 at the Manor house.

Starting in 1602, various neighbors began meeting there for worship as Separatists. One may wonder if Archbishop Sandys, the landlord, was aware of what was going on. In 1603 Elizabeth died and James I came to the throne. The Puritans and Separatists expected great things of this Presbyterian from Scotland, but were soon doomed to disappointment. Young William Bradford, an orphan and later governor of Plymouth Colony, came to live at the house. In 1606 Brewster himself joined the Separatist Church, which was growing in influence all over England. The Church of England recognized that they were a greater threat than the Catholics, and forbade all meetings. The next year Brewster and his friends were arrested and put in jail. In 1608 about fifty of them were allowed to go to Holland. Brewster, then aged forty, was elected an Elder, and supported himself by teaching and preaching.

After many years the Separatist parents could see that their children were growing up Dutchmen, and started plans to go to the New World. Through the influence of Sir Edwin Sandys, Jr. of the London (Virginia) Company, some of them formed a joint stock company. Their labor and profits were to go into a common pool for seven years. After several false starts, a company of 101 people set sail from Plymouth late in the fall of 1620 aboard the old ship Mayflower. Only thirty-four of them were “Saints.” The remaining sixty-seven “Strangers” were still Church of England people. Except for the educated leaders—Bradford, Brewster, Carver and Winslow, they were all working class. What they had in common was a determination to found a new society. Some stressed religious freedom, others a better chance in life.

Their first anchorage was at Provincetown at the end of Cape Cod. Here they drew up the Mayflower Compact, a shortened form of a church covenant. Carver was chosen Governor, and Brewster, then fifty-four years old, was named Teacher until an ordained pastor should arrive. Little or no attempt was made to settle in the New York area of “Virginia” according to instructions. With winter coming on they decided to go into Plymouth. They might have picked a better spot. They saw planting fields cleared by the Patuxet Indians, but the soil was poor and sandy and the harbor shallow. What they did not know at the time was that the Indians had recently been almost exterminated by a plague brought by English fishermen who had been working the coast for about twenty years from small settlements in Maine.

The Pilgrims were ill prepared for the winter. Food was scarce. Almost half of them died by spring. Once ashore the “Strangers” refused to go along with the Company contract. They insisted on their own individual plots. Before the plague had hit the Patuxets, the English fishermen had captured twenty young men and sold them into slavery in Spain. This was to have a sequel. The nearby Wampanoag tribe was less than
friendly, especially after the rough treatment by Myles Standish, the military leader. One day to the settlers’ astonishment, a tall self-possessed Indian walked in and greeted them in English. He was Samoset, a chief from Maine, who was visiting his friend Massasoit of the Wampanoags. With him was Squanto, one of the Patuxets who had been kidnapped some years before. He had made his way from Spain to England, and was brought home by another English fisherman. An uneasy truce was made with the Wampanoags against their enemies the Narragansetts, a much larger tribe to the west. Squanto turned out to be a real friend. He showed the Pilgrims how to hunt and fish and plant their gardens in the spring, even providing them with seed. After talks with Brewster, Squanto convinced the other Indians that they had nothing to fear from the English.

Governor Carver died that spring, and was succeeded by William Bradford, only thirty-two. He was the leader of what would be called today the “Young Turks.” The control of the old church leaders like Brewster was subordinated. The strength of his moral leadership was no longer an important factor. More settlers came. Many moved north to the Boston area for fishing and fur trading, and where the land was better for farming. As a practical measure individually owned houses and garden plots were allocated, and by degrees a more democratic form of government evolved. The Company did not insist on its rights, since the project was failing as a moneymaker. By the time Brewster died in 1644 at the age of seventy-eight, the colony was firmly established; with a reputation for tolerance not shared by the later arrivals who landed further along the Bay north of Boston.

Plymouth was never a large or prosperous colony. Its western boundary was set at Narragansett Bay. The old northern boundary is still marked by the line of the present Plymouth and Bristol Counties. In 1658 it was absorbed into the newer and stronger Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Brewster’s son Jonathan was twenty-seven when he arrived at Plymouth with his father. In 1624 he married Lucretia Oldham [11], believed to be the sister of John Oldham, the adventurer who was killed by the Pequot Indians on Block Island in 1636. She came from Derbyshire and was a midwife and prescribed herbal medicines. About 1627 she and Jonathan moved down to the James River in Virginia, where their daughter Ruth [10] was born in 1631. They later became one of the first families to settle New London, Connecticut.

MASSACHUSETTS BAY

CAPE ANN and GLOUCESTER. For many years before the first permanent settlement at Plymouth, the whole shoreline from Boston to Newfoundland had small summer settlements of fishermen, some of whom began to stay through the winter. Cape Ann and Gloucester were settled before 1625. These people came to fish, not to escape religious persecution, since many of them belonged to the Church of England, if they belonged to any.
By 1628 Puritanism had become a strong political force in England. Under Charles I businessmen and tradesmen were facing ruin in the hard times. The Puritans became the majority party in Parliament and passed the Petition of Right, which provided that the king must obey the laws of the realm. In answer, Charles dissolved Parliament, which lead to the Civil War. That year John Endicott obtained a charter and sailed with a group of settlers to Salem in the Abigail. They were better financed and prepared than the Plymouth settlers had been, but were soon absorbed into the new settlement at Boston.

JOHN WINTHROP  This next group had a strong leader in John Winthrop. He too had attended the Puritan stronghold of Cambridge at Trinity College. Although he did not graduate, by 1629 he was making about 700 Pounds a year from the practice of law. Four years after Charles I came to the throne, Winthrop was dismissed from his appointment as attorney in the Court of Wards and Chanceries, probably because of his Puritan ties. With his connections, however, he soon obtained a charter for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. As at Plymouth, some of the settlers were Puritans, others not. For the first time there were several prosperous farmers and businessmen.

In 1630 the Arbella with Winthrop and the first shipload of settlers arrived in Salem. Many, having little interest in fishing, moved down to Charlestown where there was good farmland. Winthrop and another group went on to Boston, then a rough hilly island connected to the mainland by a narrow spit of sand. Dorchester on the mainland soon became the largest settlement. By the end of the year there were over 1,000 inhabitants.

The Bay Colony, as it came to be called, extended north from Plymouth Colony to a bound three miles north of the Merrimac River, its boundary today. The three miles like the jurisdiction offshore was determined by the distance of cannon fire. The western boundary was assumed to be the Connecticut River. Endicott’s little colony at Salem and Gloucester was included, and he was given a top position in the Bay Colony.

As was the case in the earlier colonies, Winthrop saw to it that the government was controlled by the church leaders, who became known as Congregationalists, although technically the civil government had its own administration. Magistrates as well as ministers could marry people. Winthrop, of course, was Governor. Almost immediately he, Endicott and the Rev. John Cotton began changing the operation of the charter to make the colony more independent from London. However, they were as equally intolerant as the Church of England in forbidding dissident denominations.

In addition, the three leaders were strongly opposed to any really democratic government. Their Church-State oligarchy allowed no one to speak out against them. The only ones who could vote had to be members of their church, and membership was highly restricted. An applicant had to stand up in meeting and describe how he had received “grace.” Even the successful applicants might have to wait three or four years before they were judged acceptable. Some objected to this public display of their feelings, and the big majority did not even bother to apply. Only about one in five became voters. The rest were concerned only with economic opportunities.
John Winthrop, Junr., called the Younger, born in the rural village of Groton, Suffolk, followed his father to Boston in 1631 when he was twenty-five. He had gone to Trinity College, Dublin, and studied law at the Inner Temple, London. He brought with him to Boston a library of about 1,000 books. In spite of its religious repression, Massachusetts Bay was to become the leader in education; not only for the northern colonies, but eventually for the whole of America. In the beginning, however, education was intended only for future church leaders. Within fifteen years the young Winthrop became the founder of New London and the second Governor of Connecticut.

**ROGER WILLIAMS.** Roger Williams was born in London about 1604, the son of a merchant tailor. Growing out of boyhood he became interested in the newly developed shorthand writing. Taking down sermons and court proceedings, including those in the king's Star Chamber, he attracted the attention of Sir Edward Coke, Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. Coke arranged for Williams to attend Charterhouse School and Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1627. Having strong Puritan leanings, he refused Church of England preferments. In 1631 he sailed for Boston with his new wife. To his disappointment he found that the Congregational clergy there ruled with a heavier hand than the Church of England at home, and soon moved up to Salem. Not being an ordained minister he became a Teacher, widely admired for his sermons. Being still under Boston jurisdiction, he moved again in 1633 to the more liberal Plymouth Colony. Even there, however, his views caused considerable uneasiness, so in 1635 he went back to Salem where he began to preach that the Royal Patent for the Bay Colony was not a just title to the land. He said the land should have been bought from the Indians. He also declared that the civil power, controlled by the church fathers, had no authority over the consciences of men. This was too much for the three Boston leaders. Williams was tried and found guilty of being against church rule and was put in prison to await the first ship back to England.

Governor Winthrop was not as much of a hard liner as the other two leaders. Anxious to do something for this interesting young man, and knowing of his desire to convert the Indians, he suggested that Williams be allowed to go down to the west side of the Sekonk River, as it was outside the bounds of either colony. The two other leaders, however, felt that the location was too close to Boston, and that a settlement there would "infect" the Bay Colony. Somehow Williams managed to escape prison. No one dared to suggest that Winthrop might have had a part in it. In the dead of winter, leaving his wife and two small children in Boston, Williams fled to the east side of the Sekonk just within the bounds of Plymouth. That next year, 1636, Winthrop, to the astonishment of himself and the other Boston leaders, was replaced as Governor by Sir Harry Vane; a much more liberal man who represented the farmers and merchants of the community. A smear campaign was started against Vane, and he lasted only one year as Governor. Under the new wave of repression it is ironic that two of the Council who voted to banish Williams, Thomas Hooker and ex-Governor Vane, were themselves forced out within a year. Hooker took refuge on the west side of the Connecticut River, and Vane went back
to England where he was executed after the restoration of Charles II for his liberal views. Although the Congregationalists had renounced the forms of the Church of England, they insisted that all should follow the Congregational rules of conduct. Sixty people were excommunicated from the church. There were too many to banish, but they were forbidden to bear arms. They were not the only ones with whom the Boston authorities had to contend. A small group on Noodles or Noddles Island, in what is now East Boston, had formed a Baptist Church. They were a branch of the church formed some years before in London, and held meetings in Bell Lane, Smithfield. The Baptists and Quakers were outlawed in 1644. Whatever chances there might have been to compromise were lost when Winthrop died in 1649. The next year Endicott banned all churches except the Congregational.

Roger Williams had moved across the Sekonk to settle Providence. In 1638 other Baptists settled on the north end of Aquidneck Island. Three of them, John Clarke, John Crandall and Obediah Holmes, went to visit an aged brother, William Witter, living in Swampscott outside of Lynn, to preach to him and his family. The three were arrested and brought to court. Cotton charged that the enormity of the crime, denial of infant baptism, would overthrow religion and the government, and was a capital offense. He argued that the prisoners were self-murderers. Governor Endicott pronounced the death sentence, but changed it to whipping or fines. Holmes’ fine was 30 Pounds, a ten years’ income for a person on relief. Clarke’s fine was 20 Pounds and Crandall’s 5 Pounds. Clarke proposed that the three of them debate with three Boston ministers, to which Cotton agreed. However, the three ministers could not agree on their arguments, so the debate did not take place. Without his knowledge or consent, some of Clarke’s friends paid his fine and he was released. Holmes was whipped unmercifully and could not rest, except on his hands and knees for some weeks. When Holmes was untied from the whipping post, a Mr. Hazel, cousin of Samuel Hubbard, shook his hand. Hazel was so severely beaten because of this handshake that he died at the home of a friend in Boston. Cotton died in 1652. Endicott, more and more bigoted in his old age, had four Quakers executed between 1656 and 1662. Three others had their ears cut off, forty were whipped, sixty-four imprisoned, forty banished and one branded. Many were put naked in the stocks, targets for all kinds of filth. During the Quaker executions Endicott stood by and exclaimed “I thank God I am not afraid to give judgement.” It was not by chance that the first Catholic and Jewish bodies were later established in Rhode Island rather than in Massachusetts.

CONNECTICUT

WINDSOR, WETHERSFIELD and HARTFORD. In 1634 the year before Roger Williams was banished from Boston, there was a strong movement among the inhabitants of Watertown, Dorchester and Newtown (Cambridge) to leave the Bay Colony and settle across the Connecticut River. The first group headed by John Haynes thought first of
going to Windsor, already a Plymouth trading post set up in competition with the Dutch down the river at the future site of Hartford. Instead Haynes’ group picked a spot, Wethersfield, farther down the river where they could be by themselves.

In the middle of October after numerous delays, a group of about 100 people, including Samuel Hubbard and his future wife Tacy Cooper, set off through the woods and swamps “joyfully singing hymns.” They must have looked like the picture of the early Pilgrims going off to their first Thanksgiving which used to hang in so many New England schoolrooms. All of their heavy tools and farming equipment, as well as the bulk of their provisions, had been sent by boats from Boston. A severe winter had set in by the time the new “Pilgrims” reached the river. Some soon died in the bitter cold. Their little makeshift boats and rafts could not get all the livestock across the river. By late December the shallops coming by sea had not arrived. Some of the party went down to look for them at the mouth of the river, but the boats had been lost or delayed. Finally one vessel of about sixty tons came in, but was persuaded by the watchers to turn back and take them back to Boston. The survivors up the river lasted out the winter on acorns, malt and the grain they had brought for seed.

The timing of the expedition could not have been worse. The Pequot Indians, who controlled the whole Connecticut River valley, had chosen that time to go on the warpath and eliminate all the settlers in their territory. The helpless little settlements at Wethersfield and Windsor were attacked and many killed, including the group from Dorchester who had come to Windsor the summer of 1635. A third group from Cambridge under the Rev. Thomas Hooker came that fall to Hartford, which had been abandoned by the Dutch.

Hooker had gone to Emmanuel College, Cambridge like the other Puritan leaders, and had fled with them to Holland. Within months of his arrival in Newtown in 1633, he and a large part of his congregation decided that they too wanted to emigrate. Permission was refused by the Boston Council; afraid that a larger number of dissenters just over the river would be a threat to its rule. By the fall of 1635, however, there was so much trouble that permitting the Hooker party to go was thought the lesser of two evils. Off they went, but better prepared than the others. Only the defeat of the Pequot force at its frontier post against the Narragansets at Mystic by Capt. John Mason saved them all from complete extermination.

**THE NEW COLONY.** By 1639 the three little river settlements felt that they were not safe from the Pequots, so they decided to join together for mutual protection and set up their own local government. Meeting in Hartford, the colonists drew up the Fundamental Orders, afterward said to be the first written constitution in the New World. Actually it came a year later than the Portsmouth Compact drawn up by the Baptists in Rhode Island. The Fundamental Orders claimed the right to limit the powers of those they elected, and did not require church membership in order to vote; but left unresolved the question of separation of Church and State. They did do away with the system of primogeniture, whereby the oldest son inherited all from the father. John Haynes was elected the first governor.
The bounds of the colony were rather indefinite; except that they included both sides of the river to the mouth, as well as the New London settlement over as far as the Narragansett country in Rhode Island. The New Haven colony had been settled the year before, but was not included. The people there were also dissenters, but followed a strictly church rule based on Old Testament laws. Since Fairfield was being settled by the river people, that area was assumed to be part of the Connecticut colony.

**HUBBARD.** With the separation of powers left unresolved, the three church Elders in Wethersfield claimed the right to speak for the church and thus the government. *Samuel Hubbard* [11] insisted that they all have a voice, so he and three other church families and a few non-church members were told to leave. This tiny group went up the river to settle Springfield, which they assumed to be outside of Connecticut, and hopefully outside of Massachusetts. Relocating was only the beginning of his troubles.

Hubbard's grandfather *Thomas Hubbard* [13] had lived at Horden-on-the-Hill, Essex, and was classified as “Gentleman.” He was burned at the stake for being a Protestant by Edward Bonner, Catholic Bishop of London under Queen Mary Tudor. Bonner had played both sides of the religious controversy from the time of Mary’s father Henry VIII. When Bonner felt that the Catholics were safely in power again, he went on a rampage, executing over 200 Protestants. John Cotton’s execution of the Quakers in Boston was to follow a generation when the Protestants were in power. *Thomas’ son James* [12] escaped the same fate as his father by hiding in the straw of his mattress. He was afterward called “Yeoman,” having lost his father's estate.

*James* and his son *Samuel* had been living in Mendelsham, Sussex, before coming to Salem in 1633. They were still members of the Church of England when they landed; but seeking religious freedom of thought, had joined the Congregational Church. They were quickly disillusioned. In Salem they met Roger Williams, with whose ideals they strongly agreed.

*Samuel* was only twenty-five when he came to Wethersfield. On the trek to the river he met *Tacy Cooper* [11] from Dorchester. He afterwards used to tell that it was the one bright spot in the whole undertaking. They were married soon after. She was twenty-seven.

The Hubbards' troubles had not ended at Springfield. As an aftermath of the Pequot War, the colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven joined together to form the New England Confederacy. As part of the agreement, the Bay Colony boundary was extended west across the river for an indefinite distance, and beyond any doubt included Springfield. That left the Hubbards within its jurisdiction once more. As a protest they became Baptists. The next year the Bay Colony decreed that all Baptists be banished from the colony. Again the Hubbards moved, this time down to Fairfield. In 1647 Connecticut itself banned the Baptists. Hubbard was threatened with imprisonment in Hartford, so the next year they moved to Newport, near Roger Williams' settlement in Providence. Rhode Island became, and was to remain for many years the last refuge of freedom loving people.
HURLBUTT. Thomas Hurlbutt [10] was another in the first group to Wethersfield. A former soldier, he was experienced in military fortifications. In 1635 John Winthrop, Jr., son of the governor in Boston, had been appointed Commissioner for Saybrook by the titleholders, Lord Saye and Seal, and Lord Brooke. His first act was to put a garrison there under Lion Gardiner for protection against the Pequots. He then engaged Hurlbutt and another to put up a small fort. Others of Cromwell's former soldiers were induced to settle there. Capt. John Mason came down from Windsor to take command. After a few years Mason went on to help settle the town of Stonington and the city of Norwich. Hurlbutt returned to Wethersfield, and within a year was trading from the river ports in his own vessel. There he married, and his son Samuel [9] was born in 1649.

Samuel and his son Stephen [8] built up the family business over the years. They gradually moved their operations to New London, a faster growing port with deep water for larger vessels. Between 1690 and 1695 they were firmly established there. Stephen married Hannah Douglass [8] in 1696. He served in the French Wars in Canada with many others from the New London area, and was Captain of the fort which stood just above the present railroad station on the spot still called “The Parade.” Stephen’s son John was the first of the family to move up the river to the present town of Ledyard, where many of his descendents live today. Stephen’s granddaughter Freelove [6] married Shapley Morgan [6] in 1763.

PARKE. Robert Parke [11] came from Little Preston in Northamptonshire. His wife was Martha Chapen (Chapin), daughter of Capt. Robert Chapen [12] of Edmundsbury. With their son Thomas Parke [10] they sailed from Cowes in 1630 aboard the Arbella to Salem with John Winthrop. Soon after they moved to Roxbury to join the Denisons, apparently friends from home. In 1640 the Parke family moved to Wethersfield, and in 1649 to New London to rejoin the Denisons at the new settlement. Robert Parke was one of the first to settle the Groton side of Mystic in 1654, and later the town of Preston east of Norwich.

STILLMAN. George Stillman [10] was one of the later arrivals on the Connecticut. He was thirty years old when he left London with enough money to continue the shipping trade in which he had made his start. He was born in Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire in 1654, and married Jane Pickering [10] in London in 1677. Two years later their son George, Jr. [9] was born. In 1684 George and his wife sailed for Boston, leaving six year old George, Jr. presumably in the care of his mother’s family. One account says that Jane died in London, another on the voyage over.

In 1695 Stillman moved out to the rich farmland at Hadley, up the river in the middle of Massachusetts. He must have been trading between Boston and the river ports; for in 1686 he had married Rebecca Foote, a widow and daughter of Nathaniel Foote, one of the original settlers in Wethersfield. Stillman was elected a Selectman in 1704, and held other public offices. Later that year he moved down the river to Wethersfield where there was deep tidal water and he could expand his shipping business, limited at Hadley
on account of the falls at Windsor. When Stillman died at the age of seventy-four, he had become a wealthy merchant, dealing in horses and farm produce traded for sugar, rum and molasses in the West Indies. He left an estate of 4,500 Pounds and eleven children by his second wife. All of these Stillmans stayed in the Springfield area.

George Stillman, Jr., the first son, had been apprenticed to a tailor in London by his grandparents. When his time ran out in 1701, he joined his father in Hadley and moved down the river with him in 1704. There is a story that the family name in England was Pickart, but when George, Sr. came to this country he changed it to Stillman because in London he was called Spickart or Spigot. When young George came over, he changed his name to Stillman too. This story is vehemently denied by a later Stillman in Springfield. He said that an existing book was inscribed “George Stillman’s book purchased from Robert Silverthorn in London in 1698 when aged eighteen,” but there is no way of knowing when this inscription was written. A family genealogist Edgar Stillman writing in Westerly in 1903, says the family antecedents are very much in question. There were still Pickerts in the Springfield area until recently at any rate.

When George, Jr. was on his way to Boston in 1705 on a trading voyage, he stopped off in Westerly where he was surprised to see the inhabitants, Seventh-Day Baptists, working on Sunday. On the voyage home he stopped off again and tried to talk the Elder Thomas Hiscox into the Church of England, in which George, Jr. had been brought up. Instead, Hiscox converted him to the Seventh-Day faith. After settling his affairs in Wethersfield, and with who knows what family arguments, George moved down to Westerly and bought a large tract of land on Crumb’s Neck north of town on the Pawcatuck River. The next year he married Deborah Crandall, daughter of Elder Joseph Crandall [9]. They had five sons, all of whom married girls named Molly, a commonly used name for Mary. George was known as “Doctor,” so he must have picked up some medical knowledge in London while learning the tailor’s trade.

NEW LONDON

JOHN WINTHROP, JR. John Winthrop, the “Younger,” is rightly called the founder of New London. He proved to be the most ambitious of all the first generation who came to America. By 1640 he was Governor’s Assistant to his father in the Bay Colony. Like many sons of men in power, John was given every opportunity for advancement. He learned how to manipulate people and events, and before long was embarked upon his own career as empire builder. That he did not succeed was due more to the independent spirit of the new Americans than to the poor judgement of his own sons.

In the fall of 1644, Winthrop and a small party sailed from Boston to the mouth of the Thames River to look over the location for a settlement. It had first been the land of the Niantic Indians, who had been driven out some years before by the warlike Pequots. The Pequots in turn were forced out after their defeat at Mystic by Capt. John Mason in
1637. By the time Winthrop arrived the land was claimed by Uncas, chief of the Mohican Indians, who were based farther up the river at Montville. In fact Uncas claimed all of the Pequot lands in the Connecticut River valley. He was encouraged to do this by the English as a defense against the Pequots, who had only been defeated locally. For several generations Uncas and his descendents were allies of the English, but were afterward done in by later claim jumpers.

New London, for a time called Nameaug or fishing place, and then Pequot, was claimed by the Bay Colony for its part in the Pequot war. Winthrop got a grant from the General Court of the colony on May 6, 1646, which is the accepted date for the founding of the town, but before that he had not been idle. As early as 1640 he got a personal grant through his father to Fishers Island lying a couple of miles offshore, and soon built a house there. To be on the safe side, he got a grant the next year from Connecticut, and still later from New York. Connecticut, anxious to establish its claim on the Saybrook Patent as far east as possible, was only too glad to include New London itself as far over as Narragansett land at Weekapaug. Nameaug, then, was bounded on the north by Norwich at Trading Cove Brook in Montville, and Poquetanoc Cove across the river, on the west at a line somewhere between the Niantic River and Bride’s Brook. From the Massachusetts grant the eastern boundary was four miles east of the Thames, and from the Connecticut grant it was the little creek at Weekapaug.

In the spring of 1645 Winthrop and a small party, not waiting for grants, had put in at Nameaug to lay out the site for a settlement. This was agreeable with Uncas, who was looking for protection from the Narragansetts, now his chief enemies. These first settlers included: Robert Hempsted [10], Cary Latham [10], John Gager [10], William Comstock [11], Nathaniel Masters [12] and his son John [11], and Isaac Wiley [11], all from Boston. Another settler was Thomas Minor [11] from Hingham; soon to be joined by Jonathan Brewster [11] from Virginia. They were all assigned house lots in town and other sizable grants, mostly up the river.

CAPE ANN COMPANY. The next influx, known as the Cape Ann Company lead by the Rev. Richard Blinman, arrived in 1649 and 1650. Blinman had been pastor of the Church of England in Chepstowe, Monmouthshire near the Welsh border. In 1640 he had been forced out for non-conformity. With several parishioners, including James Morgan [10], he sailed from Bristol for the Plymouth Colony that autumn. They first settled at Green’s Harbor at the north end of Plymouth Bay. By 1642 they were quarreling with their neighbors, so they moved on to Gloucester, where Blinman became pastor of the Congregational Church. Here he picked up a number of followers; including, Christopher Avery [11] and his son James [10], Robert Allyn [10], Capt. George Denison [11], John Elderkin [11], Edward Stallyon [10] and William Douglass [10].

In Gloucester Avery and Denison, never noted for their amiability, wrangled continuously with Blinman. Each was brought to court for saying Blinman was no good as a pastor. After eight contentious years, the Welsh party as they were there known, decided to move to Nameaug. There were about twenty families, including Blinman's
brother-in-law Thomas Parke from Wethersfield. They settled first at Green's Harbor south of town, possibly named for their first stop near Plymouth. In 1651 nine six acre lots were laid out on Cape Ann Lane, now Jefferson Avenue, which were taken up by the more prosperous members. They were joined by twenty more families from Cape Ann, Salem and Boston; including, George Hill [11], John Picket [10] and William Stevens [11], all seafarers.

Winthrop, by reason of his position, allotted himself the “Neck” with its deep tidal water and a swift running stream, the most suitable place for a gristmill. In 1650 he organized a group of sixteen to build a mill; including, Brewster, Comstock, Gager, Hempsted and Parke. Most of them furnished labor. Winthrop reserved for himself and his heirs the exclusive right to operate the mill. Whether the others shared in the profits is not recorded. In 1662 Winthrop's two sons denied that the others had any share in the ownership. The mill, then leased out to James Rogers, was many times rebuilt, and still stands on the original site; although the mill pond has now been filled in and the stream runs through a large culvert.

Many of these first settlers were described as “fractious.” The “Blue Laws” they brought with them were often broken. Christopher Christophers, one of the leading townsmen and a married man, in 1673 fathered a child with the widow Bradley. She, not he, was sentenced to pay the “usual” fine of 5 Pounds and “wear on her cap a paper whereon her offense is written, or pay a fine of 16 Pounds.” Three years later, having lost his wife, Christophers married her.

Blinman, according to testimony of Winthrop and Brewster, “has a perverse will, can endure no opposition or contradiction and is not qualified for pastor in the way of government.” This tells us something about both his nature, and the civil power of the church. He left for the New Haven Colony in 1658, but soon left there by way of Newfoundland by the first ship on his way to England.

The western boundary of the town was in dispute for several years with the neighboring town of Lyme. Winthrop claimed over to Bride's Brook; Lyme claimed to the middle of what is now Waterford. They decided to settle it by the old medieval custom of fighting it out with “champions.” Picket and Latimer, both husky seamen, represented New London, and Griswold and Ely, Lyme. One story has it that they fought it out with bare fists, another a running race. In any case, the present boundary is the Niantic River.

EARLY LIFE in NEW LONDON. As in most frontier settlements, there was little variety in food. Meals usually consisted of broth to stretch out the meat, porridge, hasty-pudding, johnnycake, samp, beans and pumpkins. There were no potatoes. Apples were grown for cider. There was a little beer, but no tea or coffee. Starting about 1660 sugar and molasses were imported from the West Indies. Most of the molasses was made into rum. John Elderkin was licensed to keep an “ordinary” downtown. The illegal one on the north edge of town was a hangout for “fast” women, and was continually being closed down.

Every seaport community has, by its nature, those people who are town dwellers
and those who follow the sea. New London was no exception. The townsmen ran the local government, supported the established church, acted as middlemen in trade, had a hand in real estate deals, and operated the concessions. Such men were: Latham, Douglass, Masters, Elderkin, Hempsted and Mattie.

LATHAM. Cary Latham [10] married Elizabeth Masters while they were still living in Boston. She was the daughter of John Masters [11] from Derbyshire. Latham may have been the son of William Latham who came to Plymouth on the Mayflower. To provide a ferry across the “Great River” to the Groton side, the town first gave a long term lease to Edward Messenger. In 1654 he moved to farmland north of Norwich, so the lease was transferred to Latham. Messenger had only to provide a canoe the first year, and after that a boat to carry man and beast. Latham’s lease was for fifty years, so he moved across the river and built a house on Groton Bank. He probably had in mind to provide board and rooms if the weather was bad. After his death in 1685, the town took over the ferry with the income going for schools. Earlier Latham was named Town Agent (Tax Assessor) with William Douglass. One year later they were fined for not preparing a complete list. Apparently this was not too serious an offense, for he continued to hold various town positions.

In 1654 Latham was in charge of determining the north and west bounds of the town with Uncas. A big celebration was held with hundreds of Mohicans in full regalia. Since the eastern Indians did not have feather war bonnets, they probably wore bits of trade goods in addition to skins and furs. The status of the Mohican Reservation in the north part of town, now Montville, was left in doubt, and was officially incorporated into the town by an act of the legislature in 1704.

Son Joseph Latham [9] was born in Boston in 1642 and came to New London with his parents. He became a fisherman and lived part of the time in Newfoundland, where his first son was born in 1668. Another son Jasper [8] was born in Groton twelve years later. Jasper’s daughter Mary married Parke Avery [7].

DOUGLASS. William Douglass [10], son of Robert Douglass, was probably born in Scotland in 1610. He came to Gloucester in 1638. From there he moved to Ipswich and Boston, and settled in New London in 1659. Before coming over he had married Ann Mattie, daughter of Thomas Mattie [11] of Ringstead, Northamptonshire. Both Mattie and his son died before 1670, leaving Ann their only heir. Besides his town lot, Douglass was granted land in Waterford near Jordan Brook. He held many public offices—Tax Assessor, Moderator of Town Meeting, Recorder, town packer of meat, one of two men in charge of the commissary during King Philip’s War, town horse brander, committee man to choose a new pastor, and collector at the church door. He was one of the two first Deputies to the General Court, as the Assembly was then called. Both he and his son were coopers by trade.

Robert Douglass [9] was probably born while his parents were still in Gloucester. In 1665 he married Mary Hempsted, daughter of Robert Hempsted [10]. Robert and
Mary had ten children, all of whom grew up and had children of their own. Like his father, Robert was a good churchman and held various positions in the town. Daughter Hannah married Stephen Hurlbutt [8], newly arrived from Wethersfield.

**HEMPSTED.** Robert Hempsted [10] was a young man when he first came to New London. He married Joanna Wiley, a daughter of Isaac Wiley [11]. Their daughter Mary was born in 1647, the first white child in town. Hempsted got several large grants of land especially west of town, and soon started to make money buying and selling real estate. He died within ten years, leaving his property to his only son Joshua; who replaced his father’s small rough cottage with the substantial two story house which is now the oldest in New London. His last descendent to live in the house was Anna Hempsted Branch, a poet. She preserved the old tradition of always leaving the front door with the latch string out; an invitation for all to come in.

**WILEY.** Isaac Wiley [11] was allotted a farm just north of Winthrop, and assigned a cattle mark, indicating that he raised livestock. He got more land in Waterford and Stonington. Wiley was known as an agriculturalist, importing fruit trees and plants, which he developed. Before his death in 1685 he had moved to his Waterford farm at the head of the Niantic River. There are still Wileys there.

The other early settlers were seafarers, and lived by themselves on Winthrop Cove. Traders and fishermen, they had little to do with the townsmen.

**BRADLEY.** Peter Bradley had a house on the shore just north of the “Parade,” which later was known as Bradley Street. Like other small streets in old seaport towns, it later became run-down and disreputable. The city fathers in recent times solved that by changing its name to North Bank Street. It has since disappeared under redevelopment. That small section near the waterfront was where all the other seafaring families lived. Bradley married Elizabeth, one of Jonathan Brewster’s daughters. Their own daughter Elizabeth married Thomas Dymond.

**DYMOND.** Thomas Dymond and his brother John were both mariners from Fairfield. They came to New London about 1670 with their partner Benjamin Shapley [9]. Although both brothers had daughters, it was probably their sister Rachel Dymond [9] who married John Morgan, son of James Morgan [10]. Coming in with a cargo on the night of Nov. 28, 1679, Thomas ran his barque Providence ashore on the west end of Fishers Island on the rocks near the Race. He and his crew of two, John Mayhew and Ezekial Turner, barely escaped with their lives.

**SHAPLEY.** Benjamin Shapley [9] was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts in 1645, the son of Nicholas Shapleigh. The Shapleys came to New London in 1670 with the Pickets. Benjamin married Mary Picket [9] in 1672. By 1704 he was making trips to Barbadoes as shipmaster. Their house stood on Shapley Street which ran up the hill from
Winthrop Cove. Their daughter married John Morgan, Jr. [8]; in the same business, but living across the river.

**Picket.** John Picket [10] came to New London about 1647 from Salem, and in 1653 bought from Uncas between 600 and 700 acres across the river in the present town of Ledyard where Stoddard later had a ferry. In 1651 he had married Brewster’s daughter Ruth who lived just north across Poquetanoc Cove. They had three sons, all of whom were lost at sea. Picket himself was lost on a voyage to Barbadoes in 1667, leaving an estate of 1,140 Pounds. His wife inherited, and married Charles Hill the next year. It was the Picket’s daughter Mary who married Benjamin Shapley. A grandson John Picket graduated from Yale in 1732; probably the first New London boy to do so.


Young Charles Hill had been living in Maryland before he joined his family in New London in 1667. The next year he married John Picket’s widow. He and his partner Christopher Christophers, who had made a “scarlett woman” of the widow Bradley, bought a warehouse and wharfage on the Cove at the foot of Hill Street, just north of Bradley Street. Hill Street ran up to the Town Square, site of Bulkeley School, just south of the town’s “Ancientist Burying Ground.”

In 1666 the partners had built a 70 ton ship New London by John Coit and his son-in-law Hugh Mould. They followed that with the barque Regard in 1668, and the sloop Charles in 1672. The New London was the largest vessel to sail to Europe from New England up to that time. In 1689 her bell was hung in the Meeting House, the first such bell in eastern Connecticut. Until then the roll of a drum called people to meeting. Hill’s biggest business was shipping horses to Barbadoes for work on the sugar plantations. One shipment was valued at 155 Pounds. Charles outlived his wife, widow of Picket, and inherited her farm on the river in Ledyard. Hill Street and Shapley Street both disappeared with redevelopment.

**Montville.** Montville was originally the North Parish of New London. It was not until 1786 that Montville was set off as a separate town. Winthrop had granted himself a site with sawmill privileges on Oxoboxo Brook, where the brook fell into the river. John Elderkin, the tavern keeper, acquired about 700 acres farther up the brook, which he sold to a son-in-law of Winthrop’s. In 1664 Elderkin’s son-in-law Daniel Comstock [10] bought land still farther up the brook, and moved there with his family and his father William [11]. Part of the property still remains in the Comstock family.

Father William Comstock had one of the first allotments in town; coming down from Hartford in 1649 with his wife and son Daniel. A good churchman, he was appointed gravedigger for the town and sexton of the Meeting House. His duties were “to
order youth, sweep the building and keep dogs out during service." After helping
Winthrop build the mill in town, the Comstocks decided to have a mill of their own. After
two years of operation they had done well enough for William to buy some more land in
Lyme, where his other son John settled.

Daniel Comstock ran a farm as well as the mill, which was seasonal work. Too far
from town to take an active part in public affairs, he was appointed to pay wolf bounties.
Wolves were an even greater problem to stock raisers than poaching Indians. When she was
twenty-five, his daughter Anna married Ebenezer Billings across the river.

LYME. Robert Lay [11] was one of the first residents of Lyme, which was settled
by Matthew Ely from Lyme Regis, Dorsetshire. When Lyme was separated from
Saybrook in 1666, Lay became a non-resident of New London. He was a trader in his own
vessel like so many of the others, and married Sarah Fenner, daughter of Arthur Fenner
[10] of Branford up the coast near New Haven. Their daughter Phebe married John

WINTHROP AND THE CONNECTICUT CHARTER

In 1657 John Winthrop, Jr., by then fifty-one years old, was elected Governor of
Connecticut. He had outmaneuvered doughty Major John Mason, founder of Norwich
and other Connecticut towns. Mason was fifty-seven and Deputy Governor. Almost
immediately Winthrop took off for London, leaving Mason in charge of the colony.
Cromwell was still in power, but had only a year to live.

John Clarke from Rhode Island had been in London for six years; part of the time
with Roger Williams trying to get a charter for their colony. He felt that their claims
would not conflict with those of Connecticut; but after five more years of dickering,
Clarke found that he was being outfoxed by Winthrop.

In 1660 Charles II had come to the throne after Cromwell's son was pushed out.
This did not bother Winthrop too much, as he had many influential friends in London,
and in such a confused period the bureaucracy ran things. Winthrop was a member of the
Royal Society, and had more money to spend than Clarke for necessary "fees" and gifts.
For some time Winthrop had been writing to John Davenport in the New Haven colony,
telling Davenport to disregard any wild rumors regarding his intentions toward New
Haven. Thus Davenport, as well as Clarke, was electrified when in 1662 the terms of
Winthrop's new charter became known. Connecticut was to include not only the whole of
the New Haven colony, but extend west to the Pacific Ocean.

The Duke of York, the King's brother, had not yet obtained his Patent for the
Dutch settlement at New Amsterdam, so Winthrop had a huge strip of America within his
grasp. On the east Connecticut was to extend to Narragansett Bay; thus taking in more
than half of Rhode Island. The Charter, however, was as yet unsigned.

Clarke himself was not without friends in London, especially with members of the
Council on Plantations, and with Lord Clarenden the Lord Chancellor. As soon as he heard of Winthrop’s charter provisions, Clarke confronted him and accused him of trying to swallow up the best part of Rhode Island. Clarenden ordered Winthrop’s charter returned for review. Winthrop offered a compromise placing the bound twelve miles west of Narragansett Bay, which Clarke rejected. Not known at the time was that Winthrop had a large interest in the land of the Atherton Company on the west side of the Bay within the twelve miles he offered to Rhode Island.

Winthrop secretly sent two copies of his charter back to Connecticut, even though they did not have all the necessary signatures. When Clarenden heard of this, he called both men before him. Clarke blew up, Winthrop was suave and cool. In September Clarke submitted another petition which the bureaucrats assured him was in proper technical form. Winthrop put off going home. In January 1663 a compromise was reached, with the Pawcatuck River as the eastern boundary of Connecticut; even though Winthrop claimed that a previous grant had placed it at Weekapaug. Without saying so, in his own mind he did not accept the Pawcatuck boundary, and continued to assert jurisdiction over the Westerly area for many years after.

Winthrop could not buck the Duke of York; however, who claimed that his new patent gave him the whole of New York State, and as far east as the Connecticut River. Pennsylvania simply ignored the whole thing. Davenport in New Haven decided, as the lesser of two evils, to throw in his lot with Connecticut. As a sop, New Haven was made co-capital with Hartford, and so remained until the new state constitution was adopted in 1818. Winthrop ended up with northern Ohio, called the Western Reserve, and lesser claim to the land farther west. After the Revolution the Federal government bought up Connecticut rights in the Western Reserve.

Like so many ambitious men, Winthrop could not impose his will on the future. His sons Fitz John and Waitstill held high office in Connecticut and Massachusetts and had fitful military careers both here and in England. They were involved in many lawsuits and lost most of their father’s large landholdings. A grandson was the last of the family to hold state office.

Ledyard

The present town of Ledyard was originally part of the town of New London, at least to a line four miles east of the Thames River through Ledyard Center. After that Ledyard was the North Parish of Groton when that town split off from New London in 1705. Ledyard became a separate town itself in 1836.

Brewster. Jonathan Brewster [11] was the first one from New London to settle in Ledyard. He had been a trader in Virginia, but had run into debt. When he and his wife and daughter Ruth came to New London, his assets were seized by creditors in Boston, so he had to start over again from scratch. In spite of that, Brewster was the only one besides
Winthrop and Robert Parke to have the title "Mister." In 1650 Brewster and Thomas Minor [11] were the first Deputies to the General Court from New London.

That same year Brewster bought from Uncas about 450 acres on the Thames River just north of Poquetanoc Cove, and was given by New London exclusive trading rights on that side of the river. The largest part of his grant was in the town of Preston, then part of Norwich. Boundaries were not well defined. Only the south end of Brewster's Neck is now in Ledyard. He immediately built a house and trading post and moved up there. One day when Brewster was across Long Island Sound in his trading vessel, a Pequot in his employ was attacked by two Narragansetts; who said the Pequot had fired on them with a gun and ammunition supplied by Brewster. The Pequot fled to Mrs. Brewster's side, but was taken from her and killed on the spot.

In 1657 when Winthrop was elected Governor of Connecticut, Brewster was named Governor's Assistant for New London. The year before, others from New London; including, Robert Allyn [10], John Gager [10] and George Geer [11], took up grants in the area and joined Brewster.

GEER. George Geer was born in Devonshire in 1621, and came to New London with Robert Allyn thirty years later. In 1656 he took up land east of Allyn in the area of Geer Hill. Two years later he married Allyn's daughter Sarah and they had eleven children. Geer lived to be 105.


ALLYN. There was a George Allyn [11] from Braintree, Essex, who came to Cambridge in the Bay Colony in 1632 with three sons, Samuel, Matthew and Thomas. Matthew went to Hartford, where his son John became Secretary of the State when that colony was organized.

Robert Allyn [10], believed to be the fourth brother, was a cod fisherman off Newfoundland. He was twenty-nine when he settled in Salem in 1637, and where his son John [9] was born in 1642. In 1649 Robert and his family came to New London with the Cape Ann Company. He must have brought some money with him; for he was one of those who got lots on Cape Ann Lane, and a large grant up the river at Allyn's Point. In 1656 he started trading from there in his own vessel. Three years later Robert moved again up the river to New Norridge (Norwich), which had been settled nine years before by John Mason. He apparently felt that this location, in the heart of rich farming country and with good tidewater, was a better location for his business. Norwich was for many years larger than New London on this account.

Robert bought local livestock and farm produce which he traded for goods at
Boston and other New England ports. With a larger vessel he traded for sugar and molasses in the West Indies. When he retired he gave his Norwich property to his only son John, and moved back to the farm.

John Allyn [9] was nineteen when his father left him in charge at the Point. When he reached twenty-eight he married his neighbor’s daughter Elizabeth Gager. They stayed there until old Robert retired; then moved up to the Norwich house themselves, and John continued the family business. In 1683 after his father died, John built a new house and warehouse at the Point and carried on the business from there.

Like many others in the area, he took part in an expedition to Canada against the French. His command included fifty-four Pequot-Mohican Indians, by then considered more or less one tribe. The Pequots were a fairly recent offshoot of the Mohicans in any case. In Canada he suffered wounds from which he died in 1709 at the age of sixty-four. He left an estate of 1,278 Pounds to be equally divided between his only son Robert II, and his daughter Elizabeth, who had married Thomas Waterman, a partner in the business. The Norwich property had been sold, but there were three good farms in Ledyard.

Robert Allyn II [8] was born in Ledyard in 1671. At the age of twenty he married Deborah Avery, daughter of James Avery, Jr., whose family had their own trading business down the river in Groton. Still the only male Allyn after three generations, he made up for it by having eleven children. He died at the age of fifty-nine.

Ebenezer Allyn [7] was born in 1699 with his twin brother James. Leaving the shipping to his older brothers, Ebenezer went in for farming. When he was twenty-seven he married Mary Thurber of a Providence family, so he must have spent some time at sea too. He continued to increase his acreage, with several boys of his own to work it. Altogether there were twelve children, although four of them died young.

Rufus Allyn [6] was the tenth child. His brother Thomas moved to the Point but Rufus was strictly a farmer. When he was twenty-three he married a neighbor Hannah Billings, daughter of Stephen [7]. The Ledyard people did not have the time to go to church in New London, what with going to sea, farming and child bearing. A Congregational Church was organized in 1729, but did not continue regularly for many years. About 1768 Rufus and his brother Parke organized a Separatist Church, and both became Elders or Deacons. By the time Rufus died at the age of forty-three, his wife had borne nine children.

Capt. Rufus Allyn [5] was born in 1767. Unlike his father he lived to a hearty old age. When he was thirty-one he married nineteen year old Freelove Morgan, daughter of Deacon Shapley Morgan, another large landowner in Ledyard. The Separatists had now become Baptists. Rufus, Jr. found a farmer’s life pretty dull, and before long had his own trading sloop out of the Point. These small vessels remained in use for many years, but after the Revolution schooners and ships carried most of the trade. Rufus stayed with the sloop, and did not retire until 1837 when he was seventy. With him ended 190 years of Allyn’s Point as a shipping port.

Rufus’ sister Hannah married Capt. Shapley Morgan, Jr.; who died on his farm in Preston, leaving her with two babies aged three and one. She herself died the next year,
Rufus and his wife moved out to their farm to take care of the babies. Rufus III was born there in 1803, Youngs in 1805 and Russell in 1807. Rufus III died in 1808 and Julia was born in 1810. The next year the family moved to the Elder Rufus Allyn house in Ledyard. There were born Hiram in 1812, Charles Billings in 1814, Gurdon Spicer [4] in 1816, another son who died within a month, and Amos Morgan in 1820. They then moved to “The House Behind the Rock” just west of Ledyard Center on the road to Stoddard’s Ferry, where the last child Sarah Ann was born in 1823. Capt. Rufus was then fifty-six.

Charles developed the “Miamus” gasoline engine near Greenwich, and later retired to Mystic. Sarah Ann married George Allen in Preston, who later was captain on one of Gurdon’s fishing boats. Amos lived in Mystic and worked for his older brother Gurdon fishing, lumbering and house building. When Capt. Rufus, Jr. retired from the sea in 1837, they moved to the farm which had belonged to his wife’s uncle Aeneas (Enos) Morgan.

Years ago I asked Austin Lamb, a farmer in the Lambtown section of Ledyard, if he knew anything about Capt. Rufus. After much hesitation he answered “Well, I guess he was quite a character.” In other words, a real Swamp Yankee.

Gurdon Spicer Allyn [4], the ninth child of the family, left the farm when he was a young man for Mystic. His story is told later. At least two of his brothers joined the Gold Rush to California about 1850. Years later when Gurdon’s son Louis Packer was married, his wife answered a knock at the door. A stocky built man in a blue serge suit and bowler hat said “You must be Lou’s wife. I am his Uncle Russell.” He paid his respects and was never heard of again. There is a little fishing village at the head of Puget Sound in Washington named Allyn. Perhaps one of the boys ended up there.

GROTON

The original grant from Massachusetts Bay to John Winthrop, Jr. for the New London settlement in 1646 set its eastern boundary on a line four miles east of the Thames River. This was confirmed by the Connecticut General Court, which at Winthrop’s urging decided in 1651 to claim the land over to the Narragansett country at Weekapaug Creek. The present town of Westerly was inhabited by the remnants of the Eastern Niantics, driven out of Groton by the Pequots. Groton and Stonington remained Pequot country until they were claimed by Uncas and the Mohicans after the Pequot War of 1637.

By 1654 when Cary Latham took over the ferry from New London, settlers were moving in with New London grants all the way over to the Pawcatuck River. By 1700 the Groton side members of the New London Congregational Church wanted a civil government entirely separated from the church. Gurdon Saltonstall, the pastor, insisted on holding to the old system. The eastsiders formed a Separatist Church, later to become the Baptist, and were suspended by Saltonstall.

James Avery and Cary Latham finally persuaded the General Court in 1705, against the wishes of New London, to set off Groton as a separate town with its eastern boundary
at the Mystic River. Samuel Avery, James’ youngest son then aged forty-one, was elected Moderator and First Townsman (Selectman). The other Selectmen were: Samuel Fish and Nehemiah Fish from Mystic, Capt. James Morgan, Jr. from Poquonnoc, George Geer from the north parish (Ledyard), with John Davie, Clerk. Jonathan Starr was elected Constable and John Barnard, Schoolmaster.

AVERY. Christopher Avery [11] came from Ipplepen, Devonshire, where he was a kersey weaver. His wife Margery Stephens came from Abbots Kerswell. About 1642 when Christopher was fifty-two and his son James twenty-two, the two men landed at Gloucester. They may have been dropped off by Cape Ann fishermen, who made regular runs to England. Perhaps Margery was to come later, but she never did.

Gloucester was established as a town in 1653. Christopher was a Selectman for several years, and for a short time Constable, an important administrative legal post. During the time he was Selectman he was four times presented to the Court for not living with his wife. This was a serious charge with the early settlers. The last time he was fined 20 Pounds, but the fine was remitted because “he is poor and aged, and cannot pay.” He was then sixty-four. By 1658 Christopher had moved to Boston. Perhaps he made some money there, for seven years later at the age of seventy-five, he followed his son to New London and bought a house from Robert Burrows, who had moved to Mystic.

While still in Gloucester, Christopher and his friend George Denison [11] were both presented at Court for speaking slightingly of the pastor Richard Blinman. Avery said Blinman seemed more for the Church of England than for the Massachusetts (Congregational) Church. This must have brought a snort from Blinman, who had been ejected from the English Church in Monmouthshire. Avery never was much of a churchman anyway; apparently having joined only to hold office.

James Avery [10] married Joanna Greenslade in Gloucester, and came down to New London with the Cape Ann Company. A military man, he was appointed Road Surveyor and laid out the first roads in town. Avery was also appointed Lieutenant of the Train Band, as the local militia was called. One of his assignments in 1658 was to rescue Uncas when Uncas was attacked by some Narragansetts while camped out at the head of Niantic Bay.

In 1653 Avery got a grant of land in Groton on Pequonnoc Plain. There he built his house (Fig. 1) in 1656, known for many generations as the “Hive of the Averys.” The site is now marked by a granite column with his bronze bust on top. While Groton was still part of New London, he was many times Deputy to the General Court, and one of the three Commissioners (Judges) on the County Court. The “Hive” burned down in 1894, set by sparks from the new railroad alongside.

Avery was elected Deputy again for the new town of Groton from 1707 to 1712. In 1720 he was appointed Guardian of the Pequots, similar to the position held by the Mason family in Stonington and Norwich as Guardian of the Mohicans. In 1732 Avery sued to recover some of the Pequots’ lands, which were being taken over by squatters, but with no more success than the Masons. He died in 1728 at the age of eighty-two.
KING PHILIP'S WAR. After the Pequot War of 1637, the Wampanoag Indians in the Plymouth Colony and their allies the Narragansetts in Rhode Island had lived in uneasy peace with the English settlers. In 1675 their new sachem, called King Philip, succeeded his father. He realized only too well that the whites, unless eliminated, would gradually take over all the Indian land. He formed a league in southern New England consisting of six tribes in Massachusetts, five in Connecticut and two in Plymouth, and plotted the extermination of the English. King Philip struck first at Swansey in Plymouth; two months later at Deerfield on the Connecticut River in northern Massachusetts, and followed by other towns. No one knew where he would strike next. Panic swept the colonies.

In New London James Avery was promoted to Captain of the Train Band with forty Mohican-Pequots; even though the loyalty of Uncas' men was in doubt. He had a like number of English. Capt. George Denison built a “fort” at his house in Stonington, and other settlements followed suit. Westerly and other small towns in Rhode Island were evacuated.

More than a year later in a cold and snowy December, the colonial forces surrounded about 3,500 Narragansetts and Wampanoags, it was said, in the Great Swamp in southern Rhode Island for a fight to the finish. The Great Swamp is still a desolate spot, even though it is now a state park. Four English captains were killed and five mortally wounded, along with several dozen soldiers. They claimed that about 1,000 Indians were killed and many taken prisoner. The Indians suffered total defeat, ending for all time their threat to the colonies. The colonists lost one man out of every sixteen of military age in the war.
OTHER AVERYS. James Avery, Jr. [9] was born in Gloucester and came to New London with his parents while still a small child. Like his father, he became a Deputy from New London and later Groton, and held various town offices. Again like his father, he became Captain of the Train Band and Guardian of the Pequots, and carried on farming and trading at sea. In 1669 he married Deborah Stallyon, daughter of Edward Stallyon [10]. The Averys had thirteen children and left them all well provided for. When the new church was built in New London, he tore down the old one and used it to build a room onto the “Hive” which was used later as the Baptist Meetinghouse in Groton.

Ebenezer Avery [8], the fifth child, was born in the “Hive” in 1678. He went early to sea with his future father-in-law Capt. John Parke [9], and married daughter Dorothy when Ebenezer was about thirty. Selectman, Deputy and officer in the militia, he became Colonel of the 8th Connecticut Regiment in 1739. In 1717 when he was thirty-nine, his parents deeded him the “Hive” and some good pieces of farmland. The other sons got large grants when they reached middle age. The parents were not ones to hang on to everything until they died. Ebenezer also inherited from his father-in-law; and when Ebenezer died at the age of seventy-four, he left a sizable estate himself, as well as three boys and five girls.

To his son Parke Avery [7] he left the “Hive” and farm, and the gristmill on the north side of the County Road at the head of Poquonnoc Cove. Son Simon got his brass gun, his speckled Stork gun, the brass hilted sword, the silver headed cane, the oldest Great Bible, his Gruoy Coat and silk jacket and breeches and the Scarlet jacket with (silver) plated buttons. Ebenezer, Jr. got a Cloak and laced hat, the smallest silver hilted sword, the new Great Bible, his watch and the old carbine. The girls all got money. Obviously the old Blue Laws regarding dress were not being enforced in 1752.

Parke Avery married Mary Latham, great-granddaughter of Cary Latham. Like the Allyns in Ledyard, Parke was swept up in the new wave of Baptist conversions. He separated from the “standing order,” became an Elder, and preached every Sunday for many years at the “Hive.”

In 1775 when the War of Independence threatened, he was one of a committee who contracted to build Fort Griswold on Groton Heights for the sum of 265/7/9. Only six years later, two of his sons were killed there during the British attack. Parke was a Captain at the time. Son Parke, Jr. said to Thomas “Tom, my son, do your duty.” He answered “Never fear, father,” just before a bullet struck him down. Afterward the father said “Tis in a good cause.” Parke, Jr. unbelievably survived. He lost an eye, his skull broken, bayonetted in the side and plundered of his clothes during the massacre which followed the battle. With other wounded and dead he was dumped in a cart to be taken down the hill to his own house. The cart got loose and careened down the hill into an apple tree where the men were spilled out on the ground. Parke, Jr. survived another forty years.

Simeon Avery [6] was the other surviving son. On January 1, 1777 when he was twenty-one, he enlisted as Ensign in the Connecticut Militia. The same year he married Lucy Swan, daughter of Joseph Swan [7] of Swantown Hill, North Stonington. The following year he received permission from the Selectmen to free his slave Joseph aged
twenty-five. *Simeon* testified that Joseph was "able bodied and industrious and not likely to become a charge on the town."

Besides being in the battles of White Plains, Germantown, Monmouth and Stony Point, *Simeon* spent the winter of 1777 at Valley Forge with *George Potter* [7] from Westerly. In a letter to his wife dated March 23, 1778 he wrote: "The Committee is setting things in order, and as there is a number of officers more than will be needed, there will be some of us will be discharged, and I suppose or intend, to be one of them. Your loving husband and friend, Simeon Avery."

He did come home, and fathered another child. There were seven born over the next twelve years. He reenlisted within a year, and wrote from Orangetown, New Jersey in August 1780, "Dear Partner. I have enjoyed my health perfectly since I left you. I repeat to you my necessities, which I am sensible it is not in your power to relieve." He was a vigorous young man, very much in love with his wife. "I am very uneasy when I reflect upon your circumstances, but I have not drawn wages since I returned to camp. Your Sincere Friend and Affectionate Husband, Sim'n Avery." Before the end of the war he had been promoted to Colonel, and was an aide to Gen. Washington. He died when he was forty-three.

His son Robert Niles Avery was born in 1785 and was eleven when his father died. By the age of fifteen he had already gone to sea. The British were impressing American seamen, claiming that they were British born. The American government issued citizenship papers as proof of American birth. Robert’s paper was signed by Jedidiah Huntington, Collector of the Port of New London, and one of Washington’s former generals. By the time Robert was twenty-one he was master of a ship.

By 1805 Robert had an “understanding” with *Mary Hudson*, daughter of *Phineas Hudson* [6] who ran the gristmill at Old Mystic and owned the large Morgan farm in Preston. His little stone house, now with a wing added, stands at the foot of the mill race near the brook at Old Mystic. Robert’s first letter, dated Feb. 15, 1806, was written from New York. He was twenty-one and she nineteen. If they had intercourse before he left, his letter is easy to understand.

"Dear Mary, Health and Prosperity has attended me since I wrote last, and I am now ready for sea, wait only for a fair wind, and before you receive this I shall be again on the Bounding Main. I have not heard whether thou art or art not _______ when I left home. I calculated to be gone eight or nine months and that time is up, and I fear three more months before I return home again, when I hope to find you and all our friends in good health. Till then beg to be remembered by all and my best respects given to _______ Parents, with assurance of my integrity and earnest prayer for your health and happiness, I am Dear Madame your Affectionate _______ and Friend, Robert N. Avery."

The next letter was from Fort Royale, Martinique dated March 24 and opened at Antigua on April 5 by order of the Court of Vice-admiralty.

"Dear Mary, Knowing that a few lines from a long absent friend will be
acceptable, and more particularly from one whose future happiness depends on yours, he wishing the same to afford you some secret pleasure, as well as to inform of his health and asking for yours, together with the wish of being remembered by you and to your (I hope soon to say our) Parents, and particularly to Mama (for such I pray she may be) for in six weeks I shall be there and ready to wait on you to Poquonnoc Bridge, Preston, Plainfield or where else it is most agreeable, till then I must be content to subscribe myself your unfeigned, truly sincere Friend”.

They were married June 19, 1806 at Groton. Their first child, Mary Latham Avery, was born Feb. 21, 1808.

Robert was at sea again in the summer of 1806. The next letter dated Sept. 26, 1806 was datelined Midelle?, Coast of Labrador, Mrs. Robert N. Avery, by Captain Snow, schooner Republican.

“Dear Mary, In my last dated 9th inst. I mentioned the uncertainty of my writing to you again from this port, I being so nigh ready for sea, but I have been detained by foul weather, but am now ready to embrace the first fair wind to proceed on my voyage. The ship still proves tight so I dont apprehend any danger and am in hopes to make a good voyage for my owners, which if I do I cant make a bad one for myself for I have a cargo worth near 14,000 dollars and I am in hopes to get 30,000 dollars for it, so wishing you a pleasant enjoyment of winter and all seasons till I return, and through Life, with respects to Father and Mother I am your affectionate Husband, Robert N. Avery.”

He crossed the Atlantic to Marseilles, where the next letter was posted on Jan. 25, 1807.

“Dear Mary, This is my fourth voyage from this port.”

On a previous voyage out from Marseilles, he writes off Cape Trafalgar at the end of October 1805 that there was a lot of wreckage on the sea, and reports of a great naval battle. He continues:

“I am now all ready for sea, wind and weather permitting, for New York, and I am in hopes to be at home in two months say April, it being the month I have returned in for several years past. I have on board on my own account the amount of 1,200 dollars in Brandy, Hatts, Almonds, Calks (corks), and China, ten hundred of which I have requested Father [Hudson. His own father died when he was nine.] to get insured, for fear some unfortunate accident might befall me. Believe me your affectionate Husband and sincere Friend, Robert N. Avery”.

On April 3, 1809 he wrote from St. Barthomeny, West Indies.

“Dear Mary, We arrived yesterday and have sold for a pretty handsome profit and shall load the vessel with Rum, Sugar and Coffee for home, which I hope to see in five weeks. I hope you have not failed to
discharge those little debts due Morgan and Whipple nor to have the
garden made or fence put up. Give little Mary one kiss for me and make
my respects, etc.”

By early June he was on his way to the West Indies again, and wrote from St. Croix
on July 22.

“Dear Mary, I embrace the first opportunity to inform you of my safe
arrival, at a very low glutted market. Have sold the cargo for Rum and
shall make all possible dispatch and hope to be home in three of four
weeks. Give little Mary a hearty kiss for me and believe me your Ever
Loving Husband.”

They were then living at Head of Mystic (Old Mystic), Stonington.

The War of 1812 began that spring, and the British declared an embargo on all
American ports. On April 30 Robert wrote from New Orleans.

“River Mississippa. I am now forty-five miles below New Orleans bound
for Cadiz. We are told by todays paper that an embargo has taken place
which makes me very anxious to get away for fear we should be
stopped. Remember me to our little ones [Robert Phineas was born on
May 12, and Margaret July 24 the previous year.] and give them a
dozen kisses for me. P. S. Here is ten thousand musketoes buzzing
around and every now and then give me a nip while I am writing. 10
o’clock bed time.”

The letter was brought by brig Ganges Captain Thompson and cancelled in New York
May 21.

The last letter was dated Cadiz July 30, 1813, and cancelled in New York March 16,
1814.

“Dear Mary, I am happy to inform you we are all ready for sea, with a
cargo of salt. I have sent on to Mr. Albert Ogden & Co. of New York a
Bill of Exchange on my account for $731.27 for him to collect. The
Bill is drawn on William W. Rupel, or in case of need, on Messrs.
Minturn & Champlin, New York, however I hop to be there to collect it
myself, yet it is necessary you should know of it in case of accident to
me. Hoping to have the pleasure of seeing you and our little ones soon
all well.”

By the early summer of 1814, peace feelers were being put out to end the war. John
Quincy Adams was in Russia. Albert Gallatin, James Bayard, Henry Clay and Jonathan
Russel met with the English commissioners in Ghent, Belgium to draw up a peace treaty.
Avery’s vessel and another ship, as the family story goes, each took with them copies of
instructions from Congress. While Avery was in Paris he had his portrait painted. It shows
a husky young man with reddish hair, sunburned face with white forehead, and bright
blue eyes. It is said that Mary objected to the painting on account of the sunburned face,
deemed unbecoming to a gentleman.

On June 10, 1815 soon after his return home, Robert was killed when a sand bank
caved in on him near his home. He was twenty-nine years old. During his brief lifetime he began to make money, as shown by the several fine pieces of furniture he bought. Some were made in eastern Connecticut, including a pair of Hepplewhite chairs made by Richard Fosdick of New London. There was a set of six coin silver teaspoons made by H. Sargeant initialed RNA and a dessert spoon made by N. Harding initialed MA. Another set of twelve teaspoons made by D. B. Hempsted was marked AVERY. Mary and the two girls kept the Preston farm, and about two years later she married Robert’s younger brother Joseph Swan Avery [5]. Joseph (Fig. 2) was thirty and she twenty-nine.

Figure 2. Joseph Swan Avery, 1787-1865.

The Joseph Swan Averys had four children of their own, born between 1817 and 1827. Soon after they were married, Joseph built a house and store on the west shore in Mystic on what later became Water Street, just north of Fort Rachel. There was a gallery facing the water on the second floor. The first story of cut stone later became part of the Members’ Building at the Mystic Seaport. He became a successful trader and shipowner; helped no doubt by the money Mary brought him.

Their only son Joseph C. Avery was lost at sea when he was twenty-nine. Their daughter Hannah L. [4] was born in 1819. She first married Alden Rathbone (Rathbun) in 1838. He died soon after, and she married Gurdon Spicer Allyn [4] from Ledyard. Someone left a description of Uncle Joe Avery, as the family called him, in his old age.

“He was of medium height and rather stocky, light gray or blue eyes, was bald except for a few thin locks he trained over the top of his head, light complexion. He had a graceful manner in his movements, steps
rather short, but quick and spry. There was always a toothpick or stick of some kind between his lips. He rarely ever showed his teeth. When he laughed he would protrude his lips, and blurt the laugh through them and his face lit with smiles.

Every Sunday right after breakfast he would walk up to his Hudson farm [in Preston] to spend the day, carrying his coat on his arm. He was gallant with the women. When he met a woman, rich or poor, he would lift his hat, make a bow and give a cheery ‘Good day, Madam’. He was generous and gave much to charity. He would often be seen nights after closing the store, going with a basket of good things to help some poor family. He would go to every funeral, but never to church, except to a funeral.

When vexed, good and mad, the limit of his cuss words were ‘dom it’. He did not use tobacco or rum, but I remember way back years ago the sideboard in his house with fancy decanters filled with wines and liquors free to all. So did every stylish family have a sideboard to treat their company."

Mary died in 1855 at the age of sixty-seven. How often she must have read those tattered letters from the dashing Captain Robert. Their daughter Mary Swan married Marvin Avery and lived in Georgia, but daughter Hannah lived right next door. Her little grandchildren Juliaett and Louis must have been a great comfort to her.

Joseph died ten years after Mary. His estate was valued at $17,356.00; included were the Bailey Farm on Swantown Hill, 5/6 interest in the Hudson Farm, a house on the Noank Road and his own galleried house and store on Water Street. There were two feather beds, still a luxury, a dozen coin silver teaspoons marked JSA, made by D. B. Hempsted and valued at $10.00, and five tablespoons at $5.00. Some have his own initials JSA and others RNA for his brother Robert. From all this it would appear that he left his only surviving daughter Mary Swan Avery pretty well off. As it turned out, he died insolvent, what with mortgages and loans.

HUDSON. John Hudson [7] bought the mill site at Old Mystic from Eleazer Williams in 1786. John died in 1808 at the age of eighty-six. Little is recorded of the Hudsons. There was a Hudson Point near the old part of Boston.

His son Phineas Hudson [6] married Margaret Sabin and continued to run the mill. The old cut stone house still stands. The Preston Farm was passed down in the family. Their daughter Mary married first Robert N. Avery, and then his brother Joseph. Phineas must have been ailing; for two years before his death in 1811 at the age of forty, he sold the bark house and vats for dyeing to Mary’s father-in-law Simeon Avery. It might have been on a defaulted mortgage. She bought back the works from her brother twenty-one years later.

MORGAN. James Morgan [10] was an original member of Richard Blinman’s
“Welsh Company” to Gloucester, and followed him to New London with the Cape Ann Company. From his name Morgan must have been Welsh. He married Margery Hill in Roxbury. From New London he moved in 1657 to Pequonnoc next to his friend James Avery. The cemetery there is called the Avery-Morgan, since the two families inter-married almost from the beginning. Morgan already had a grant of land on the Mystic River in 1651 when New London laid claim to the whole of Groton. It seems needless to say that he, like the others, was a farmer and trader. Besides being Selectman and Deputy in New London, he held the same positions in Groton, and was Captain in the early Indian Wars.

John Morgan [9] was twelve when his family moved from New London to Groton; and was twenty when he married Rachel Dymond, who had come to New London with her brothers from Fairfield.

John Morgan, Jr. [8] was born on the farm in Poquonnoc, and later became a sea captain. He was twenty-nine when he married Ruth Shapley, daughter of Benjamin Shapley [9], another seafarer in New London.

John Morgan III [7] became a farmer in Ledyard, where his family have since lived for many generations. He married Sarah Cobb, daughter of Henry Cobb, Jr. [8], another farmer in Stonington.

Shapley Morgan [6] was born in Ledyard, and married Freelove Hurlbutt, granddaughter of Steven Hurlbutt [8], a neighboring farmer. Their daughter Freelove married Rufus Allyn, Jr. [5].

Some of the earlier Morgans moved to Hartford and New York, where they made “princely fortunes.” The ones who stayed in Groton and Ledyard never got far from their farms. Many remained Baptists, the wealthy ones became Episcopalians.

STALLYON. Edward Stallyon [10] came with his wife Margaret to New London with the others in 1651. Unlike many of them he stayed in town for over thirty years. He must have done well with his trading sloop from the beginning, for in 1660 he had one of the few stone houses in town. Very much the businessman, in 1673 he was fined 30 Shillings for sailing his vessel from New London to Norwich on the Sabbath. In 1680 he had a new 30 ton sloop Edward and Margaret built by Hugh Mould.

About 1684 he built a house on the Pleasant Valley Road in Groton. It is still standing, and believed to be the oldest house in town. His daughter Deborah married James Avery, Jr. Edward died as he had lived—on the water. In May of 1703 he drowned while crossing the river to New London in his dugout canoe. Although he married three times, his daughter was his only heir.

STONINGTON

CHESEBROUGH. Goodman William Chesebrough [11] was one of the first arrivals in the Bay Colony with John Winthrop, Sr. in 1630. Ten years earlier he had married
Anna Stephens in Boston, Lincolnshire where they both were living; and where their son Samuel Chesebrough [10] was born in 1627. William was a gunsmith and blacksmith, trades he carried on in the New World. In 1639 they moved out to Braintree where he was elected a Deputy.

Like many others in that first decade, he found living in the Bay Colony oppressive; so with a party of about thirty, he moved down to the Plymouth Colony in 1642 and settled the town of Rehoboth. He did well at his trade, for in the 1643 Town (Tax) List he was worth 450 Pounds. Even in Plymouth he was often at odds with the General Court. At one point he was arrested for having an "affray" with an Indian named Vassamequine. Some have wondered if this name had a Norse derivation. Soon after he started looking for still another place to live.

At the same time John Winthrop, Jr. in New London was looking for a first class gunsmith. He asked Chesebrough to join them, in spite of his troublesome reputation. On his way down to look over the prospects Chesebrough stopped off in Providence to talk things over with his friend Roger Williams. After seeing Winthrop, Chesebrough decided not to settle in New London; and started back along the shore, which Williams had suggested, to look at a place called Wequetequock on a salt creek navigable for a small boat, and surrounded by salt marshes and open fields. It was an ideal spot for stock raising, so he decided to settle there. Winthrop, eager to extend the bounds of New London farther east than the middle of the Groton area, urged Chesebrough to take it up. In 1649 he moved down with his wife and four sons, becoming the first settler in Stonington.

He began trading with the Indians and with settlers across the Sound on Long Island. The next year some of his old adversaries in Rehoboth reported to the Connecticut Court that he was selling iron tools and perhaps firearms to the Indians. He was ordered to stop, and report to the Connecticut magistrate John Mason in Saybrook. Chesebrough at first claimed that he was living within the bounds of the Bay Colony, and refused to answer; but the next year Winthrop urged him to go to Hartford. He did not want to lose New London's claim to the area. In Hartford Chesebrough swore that he had disposed of all of his iron stock and tools before leaving Rehoboth, and was only engaged in legitimate trade. He also pointed out that he was a staunch supporter of the established (Congregational) church. He was forced to give a bond of 1,000 Pounds to insure that he did not trade unlawfully, and to furnish a list of responsible people to settle there with him. Hartford authorities did not trust a loner.

So that year, 1651, Chesebrough persuaded his friend Walter Palmer [12] in Rehoboth to join him, along with Thomas Minor [11] in New London, and Thomas Stanton, a friend of Winthrop's in Hartford. Stanton's grant for a trading post was on the west bank of the Pawcatuck River. Chesebrough's grant was a large one, about 2,000 acres. It included Stonington Point, then called Long Point; and was bounded on the west by Stony Brook, north by the old Pequot Trail, and east by Anguilla (Eel) Brook which ran down to Little Narragansett Bay. He was appointed Magistrate out of New London, Deputy, and Selectman; a position he held until his death in 1667.
His son Samuel Chesebrough married Abigail Ingraham of Bristol, Rhode Island. They had seven children. Samuel died in 1673 at the age of forty-six. Their daughter Abigail married John Avery [9] of Groton, whose sister Hannah married Ephriam Minor [10].

DENISON. William Denison [12] was born in Bishop's Stortford (Stratford), Herfordshire about 1570, and was twelve years old when both his father John [13] and his mother Agnes Willie (Wiley) died of the plague. He married Mrs. Margaret Chandler (Monck) when he was about thirty-three, and had four boys—John, Daniel, Edward and George. William was “well seated” and sent the two older boys to Cambridge. His brother Edward went to Ireland in 1631, where his son John became Deputy Governor of Cork. The same year that Edward went to Ireland, William with his wife and three younger sons came over on the Lion with John Eliot and settled in Roxbury. He brought with him a “very good estate.” The family continued to prosper, and son Daniel later married Governor Dudley’s daughter. William, no doubt, was one of those who put Vane in as Governor for that one year.

George Denison [11] was eleven years old when the family came to Roxbury. When he was twenty he married Bridget Thompson. They had two daughters, Sarah who married Thomas Stanton, and Hannah who married Nathaniel Chesebrough, brother of Samuel. The Thompsons came from Little Preston, Preston Capes Parish, Northamptonshire. Richard Wheeler in his History of Stonington gives the family the usual plug of family genealogists:

“The Thompson family in their English home held a high position, their social status being next to that of the county families. Mistress Alice must have been a lady of character and refinement. Her success in bringing up her children through all their troubles and so well preparing them for their duties in life which they assumed, testifies to this.”

When Bridget died in 1643 with the birth of her second child, George took off immediately for England. The family said he left right after his wife’s funeral to get another wife. The next summer he was fighting with Cromwell’s army at York and Marston Moor, where the Royalists were defeated. George was wounded and taken prisoner, but escaped. He made his way to his cousin’s in Cork where he appears to have been nursed back to health by Ann Borodell, whose family were prosperous leather merchants in the city. He married Ann; her brother John Borodell gave her a dowry of 300 Pounds. The following year, 1646, John Borodell Denison [10] was born back in Roxbury.

In 1650 to assert its claim to the Stonington area, Massachusetts granted George a piece of land where the present Homestead stands. Two years later Connecticut granted him additional land on the east side of the Mystic River abutting his first piece. Connecticut had already been giving grants on both sides of the river to New London people as told in Major John Mason’s Great Island. In 1654 when Denison built his first house on the Massachusetts grant, the Mystic River settlers tried to separate from New
London. Winthrop refused, and the case was taken to the Court of the New England Confederacy. Dominated by the Bay Colony, the Court decided in 1658 that the Mystic River be the boundary between Connecticut and Massachusetts, which would run east to Weekapaug Creek, the very land that Winthrop claimed. It is easy to imagine the storm that arose from the Connecticut grantees. Massachusetts, already prepared for the decision, immediately set up the town of Southerton. Denison was named Magistrate, or chief executive officer, and Walter Palmer appointed Constable.

Finally, when Winthrop got his new Connecticut Charter in London, Stonington was included in Connecticut. In 1665 the town was named Mystic, but when the people living on the Groton side claimed prior use of the name, it was changed to Stonington. Chesebrough replaced Denison as Magistrate, but he refused to accept the new jurisdiction and continued to act and marry people. The Connecticut General Court passed an Act of Oblivion pardoning all those who had held on to their Massachusetts appointments “Captain Denison only excepted.” It was only after his gallant service in the King Philip’s War of 1676 that Denison was forgiven.

Besides suing Chesebrough for defamation, Denison was almost continually engaged in other lawsuits. At the Court of Assistants (County Court) in 1664, he charged John Carr with engaging without permission the affections of his daughter Anne, aged fifteen, and trying to get her to elope. Besides that, Carr was accused of stealing items of value from his house. Carr was fined 34/7/4 for defaming her. He recanted, but was arrested the next year with another fellow for enticing wives from their husbands, concealing themselves in houses and writing letters which were intercepted.


William Denison II, another son, went to live on the part of the farm in North Stonington. When he was twenty-one he married Mary Avery, daughter of John Avery [9] of Groton. She was the granddaughter of William Chesebrough, George’s old foe. Fortunately for his peace of mind, George had been dead for four years. Their daughter Lucy married John Swan, Jr. [8], a neighbor on Swantown Hill.

PALMER. Walter Palmer [12] was born in London in 1585. After his wife died, he came to Salem when he was forty-three with his daughter Grace and son William. With his brother Abraham, a London merchant, and nine others he moved to Newtown (Charlestown), Massachusetts, and is believed to have built the first house there in 1629. In 1633 he married Rebecca Short. Their daughter Hannah was born the next year, followed by sons Nehemiah, Moses and Gershom. They all came to Stonington with William Chesebrough, after first going to Rehoboth.

Palmer made his living stock raising and blacksmithing. He lived eight more years in Stonington, and died at the age of seventy-six. He was Constable under Massachusetts, and died before the town became part of Connecticut. Grace married Thomas Minor II in 33
MINOR. Thomas Minor II [11] was born at Chew Magna, Somerset in 1608. He came from the longest line in the family record, although there were others of more dubious descent. Henry Minor [18] was born in the Mendip Hills of Somerset. The family name at the time was Bullman. For furnishing King Edward III with one hundred men-at-arms to fight in France about 1327, he was given a coat-of-arms and the name Minor; a name less suggestive of a farm laborer. It is interesting to think that he may have participated in the Battle of Crecy. He died in 1359; the year Edward again invaded France to establish his claim to be King of France. Minor’s descendents were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Married/Announced To</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry Minor, Jr.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>married Henrietta Hicks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Minor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(?) Greeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodowick Minor</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ann Dyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Minor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bridget Hervie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Minor II</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Isabella Harcope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement Minor</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sarah Pope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Minor II</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Grace Palmer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thomas Minor II came to Salem with Winthrop, Sr. in 1630 and settled in Charlestown. There he married Grace Palmer in 1634. After son John was born, they moved to Hingham where four more sons including Ephriam were born. In 1645 they came to New London with Winthrop, Jr. Minor continued stock raising and was given a cattle mark before 1650. In 1649 he was named Military Sergeant, and the next year was elected with Jonathan Brewster the first Deputies from the town to the General Court. His son Manassah was the first white boy born in New London.

Thomas was on Chesebrough’s list as an acceptable settler in Stonington, and in 1655 bought a large tract from Cary Latham on Quiambaug Cove. Besides raising stock and trading, he planted an orchard of apples, pears and gooseberries. His son John and Palmer’s son John studied to preach the Gospel to the Indians, but both decided not to pursue this avocation.

Ephriam Minor [10] was thirteen years old when his family left Hingham. There he had known eleven year old Hannah Avery, daughter of James Avery [10]. Ten years later they were married after the Averys moved to Groton. Ephriam fought in the King Philip’s War when he was thirty-three. He left ten children, and was buried at Taugwonk.

Ephriam Minor, Jr. [9], the oldest son, was born in 1668. He married Mary Stevens, daughter of Richard Stevens [10] of Taunton. His sister Rebecca Minor married Josiah Grant [9], a newcomer to town. The Minors’ daughter Bridget married Grant’s son Oliver.

PARKE. Robert Parke [11], after living in Wethersfield for several years, came to New London in 1649 to enlarge his shipping business. He was already successful and the only one besides Winthrop and Brewster to be called “Mister.” His barn was used as the first Meetinghouse. About 1655 he and his family moved to Stonington when the jurisdiction of the town was still in dispute. When it was awarded to Massachusetts in
1658, Parke was elected one of the first Deputies to Boston, and was also a Selectman. Thomas Parke [10], after coming to New London with his parents, married Dorothy Thompson. Her sister Mary had married the Rev. Richard Blinman, and another sister Bridget married George Denison. Thomas bought the land in Stonington which had been granted to Blinman, but in 1686 moved to Preston, then part of Norwich. He was one of the first settlers in that town. He located in good farming country on the north side of Poquetanoc Cove.

John Parke [9] continued the family shipping business, and was always known as Captain. He married Mary Witter, daughter of Josiah Witter [10], a neighboring farmer. The Parkes' daughter Dorothy married Ebenezer Avery [8] of Groton.

HEWITT. Thomas Hewitt [10] is first mentioned as being in command of his own vessel in the Mystic River in 1656. His house was on the site of the present Elm Grove Cemetery at the “Narrows.” In 1659 he married Hannah Palmer. In 1662 the year the second child was born, he sailed for the West Indies with a cargo he had bought, consisting of neat stock, sheep and poultry. He was never heard of again. Wheeler says “All on board had found a grave in the cold, dark, heaving sea.” Nine years later his widow married Roger Sterry; and after he died, married John Fish, himself a widower.

Benjamin Hewitt [9] never knew his father, but was brought up in the seafaring tradition. When he was twenty-one he married Marie Fanning, daughter of Edmund Fanning [10]. Their daughter Hannah married Increase Billings [8].

FANNING. Edmund Fanning [10] was in Groton in 1652 and Mystic in 1662, but nothing sure is known of him except his Irish ancestry. One tradition makes him a Protestant escaping from Dublin in 1641 at the time of the Great Rebellion when 100,000 Protestants, so it is said, were slain. Another tradition makes him the son of Dominicus Fanning, mayor in Ireland under Charles I and taken prisoner at the Battle of Drogheda in 1649. As a member of the Irish Council, Dominicus refused to accept clemency unless the English would secure to the Irish their religion, lives and property. All the garrison except Dominicus was put to the sword, and he was then beheaded by Cromwell and his head put on a pole at the city’s gate. Whether or not Edmund was a Catholic, it is a good Irish story. According to a tombstone at Riverhead, Long Island, his son Edmund, Jr. married Catherine, daughter of Hugh Hayn, Earl of Connaught, and escaped to America with two sons Thomas and William.

When Edmund was living in Stonington, he and his wife Ellen had five boys and one girl Marie. She married Benjamin Hewitt [9]. Ellen was the great-aunt of Nathaniel Fanning, midshipman with John Paul Jones.

WITTER. William Witter [11] was in Swampscott in 1650, and died there nine years later at the age of seventy-five. He was the one visited by the three Baptists from Rhode Island, who were fined and flogged for preaching there. He and his wife Annis had a girl Hannah and a boy Josiah, who worked the farm with his father. When William died
he left the farm, one half to his widow and the other half to Josiah. Hannah, already married, got a ewe and a lamb.

Josiah Witter [10] married Elizabeth Wheeler, daughter of Thomas Wheeler [11], in Lynn in 1662. Soon after he bought a large tract of land in the center of Stonington; now the south part of North Stonington, where he lived for the rest of his life. There his daughter Mary was born in 1665. She later married John Parke [9].

WHEELER. Thomas Wheeler [11] was born in 1602 in Cholderton, England; supposedly the same town as the Rev. James Noyes, the first Congregational minister in Stonington. Wheeler was a resident of Lynn in 1635 and became a large landowner and operated a gristmill and sawmill. He and his wife Mary had a boy Isaac and two girls, Elizabeth and Sarah. In 1667 they moved to Stonington to join Noyes and Witter, and were among the organizers of the First Congregational Church; called the Road Church because it was located on the old Pequot Trail. Wheeler and his son Isaac built their house in Stonington on the farm where his descendents live today. He served his time as Deputy in 1673.

BILLINGS. William Billings [10] was a sea captain out of London, and came to Dorchester from Taunton, England in 1654. In Dorchester he married Mary Atherton, daughter of Major Humphrey Atherton [11] who later became involved with Winthrop, Jr. in some dubious land deals in Rhode Island known as the Atherton Purchase. Billings continued his seafaring here, and bought a large tract of land around Cossatuc Hill in North Stonington.

Ebenezer Billings [9] kept one foot on the farm, but spent much of the time at sea. When he was twenty-one, he married Anna Comstock across the Thames River in Montville. For a time he was Magistrate on the County Court.


Stephen Billings [7] was born on the farm like the rest of them, and married Bridget Grant, daughter of Oliver Grant [8]. She died in 1762 after the birth of her sixth child. Two years later Billings married Mary Ledyard of Ledyard. After twenty-two years of marriage and one child, she died in 1787. Two years after that, when he was fifty-five, he married Martha Denison. Richard Wheeler in his History of Stonington has Billings twelve years old when he first married, and all the children's dates correspond, but I doubt if he were that precocious.

In 1775 Connecticut built the fourteen gun brig Defense. Stephen was one of the three lieutenants with a crew of 120. The Defense saw much active service against the British. In 1778 it was converted to a ship rig, but broke up on Barlett's Reef coming into New London harbor. A number of men were lost, but Stephen made it to shore. He later served four terms as Deputy under the new Republic. Hannah Billings, his first child, married Elder Rufus Allyn [6].
**GRANT.** Matthew Grant [11] was born and married in England, and came to Dorchester with his wife Priscilla and four year old daughter aboard the *Mary and John* in 1630. Their son Samuel was born the next year. In 1636 they followed the first group to Windsor. Grant was Town Clerk there for many years, and was active in the church.

Samuel Grant [10] married Mary Porter (or Potter) in Windsor in 1658, and became one of the first settlers in East Windsor in 1680. Like most of the rest of them he was in shipping and trading, and moved down to Hartford later when it became the chief river port.

Josiah Grant [9] was born in East Windsor. He came to Stonington when he was twenty-seven, and married Rebecca Minor the next year.

Oliver Grant [8] was born in 1703 and was twenty-three when he married his first cousin Bridget Minor. Their daughter Bridget married Stephen Billings.

**COBB.** Henry Cobb [9] came to Plymouth in 1630 when he was thirty years old, sailing from Southwark, Kent. The next year he married Patience Hurst. In 1637 after the birth of their third child they moved to Scituate south of Boston where Cobb was a Deacon. In 1645 they moved out to Barnstable on Cape Cod where he became the pastor. His wife died in 1648 after the birth of their seventh child. The next year he married Sarah Hinkley, daughter of Samuel Hinkley [10], and had eight more children by her. In those days a pastor could afford children. He was five times Deputy to the Plymouth General Court, and died in Barnstable in 1679.

Henry Cobb, Jr. [8] married Lois Hallet, daughter of Joseph Hallet [9], in 1690 when he was twenty-five. About 1703 he and his cousin Samuel Hinkley, Jr. moved to Stonington and bought a farm on the east side of town. In 1717 they divided the property, Hinkley keeping the part still known as Hinkley Hill. Henry's sister Sarah came to Stonington too; and after the Cobbs moved to Windham, Connecticut, she stayed on with the Hinkleys for three years before marrying John Morgan [7] of Groton in 1728.

**HINKLEY.** Samuel Hinkley [10] was born in Tenderton, Kent. About 1634 he and his wife Sarah sailed aboard the *Hercules* from Sandwich, Kent for Scituate with their four children. In 1640 they moved out to Barnstable five years ahead of the Cobbs. Their daughter Sarah married Henry Cobb with his seven young children when she was twenty-one. She then had eight of her own, and was fifty-eight when she died.

**SWAN.** Richard Swan [11] first appeared in Boston in 1639 when he joined the church and had his youngest son baptized. His wife had died in England, and Swan had come over with his seven children. Afterward he moved to Rowley north of Cape Ann and farmed. In 1658 about twenty years after coming to Boston, he married Mrs. Ann Trumbull, already twice a widow. He took part in the King Philip's War and an expedition to Canada, and was a Deputy for many years.

Robert Swan [10] was born in England and was about thirteen when he came to Boston. After the family moved to Rowley he married Elizabeth Acie. In 1650 they
moved to Methuen across the Merrimac River on the very edge of the Bay Colony. Between 1653 and 1676 they had twelve children. He and his father were in the Great Swamp Fight in 1676.

John Swan [9] was born in 1668. When he was thirty-one he married Susannah Eastman, widow of Thomas Wood, and went to live in her house in Haverill. She was the daughter of Philip [10] and granddaughter of Roger Eastman [11], who was born in Stratford and came to New England in 1631.

While Susannah was married to Wood they were attacked by Indians, and Wood and their daughter were killed. Two years later in 1699 she married Swan. Again the Indians attacked. The Swans saw them coming and just managed to reach their house, where they braced themselves against the inside of the narrow door. One Indian pressed his back against the door while two others pressed against him. The door was slowly forced open. Swan was ready to give up and let them in. After her previous experience Susannah knew there would be only one result. She grabbed up the three foot iron spit from the hearth and thrust it into the Indian's body, killing him on the spot. The other two fled.

Over the next six years three children were born. In 1707 they moved down to Swantown Hill in North Stonington, where four more children were born. Susannah died in 1772, one hundred years old.

John Swan, Jr. [8], the oldest child, was seven years old when the family left Haverill. He was twenty-six when he married Lucy Denison, daughter of William Denison II [9] on the neighboring farm.

Joseph Swan [7] was born on the farm in 1734. In 1756 he married Elizabeth Smith of Groton. She died in 1760 after the birth of their third child Lucy Avery Swan. Two years later Joseph married Mary Minor and had four more children. Daughter Lucy married Simeon Avery [6] of Groton, just before he went off to fight in the Revolution.

RHODE ISLAND

PROVIDENCE. We last left Roger Williams in the winter of 1635 fleeing from Boston to the Sekonk River on the western edge of the Plymouth Colony. The first thing he did was to contact the two Narragansett chiefs, Cononicus and his nephew Miantonomo, with whom he had become acquainted while in Plymouth and Salem. He had learned their language, and now told them he wanted to live in friendship with them. From them he bought a tract of land across the river, now the site of Providence.

"Out of pity" he allowed a few like-minded friends to join him. They were an odd lot, not the types to found a colony. Thomas Angell was a twelve year old servant, probably escaping his indenture. John Smith [11] was a miller who had been banished from Dorchester with his wife Alice and their son John, Jr. for being Baptists. Francis Wickes was a young admirer of Williams, who later gave his name to Wickford. Two others came from Salem, Joshua Verin a "roper" and a lad of Richard Waterman's [11]. Waterman himself came later. Twenty year old Benedict Arnold witnessed the deed to
Williams from the Indians. He was there to be in on the ground floor in a new settlement, not to escape Massachusetts. In fact, a few years later the Arnolds and their group at Pawtuxet put themselves under the authority of the Bay Colony.

Verin was a problem from the first. He refused to “hear the Word” for a twelve-month, and later was charged with beating his wife for going to Meeting. Arnold defended him in court, saying that it was God’s ordinance that wives should be subject to their husbands. The Verins finally went back to Salem.

John Smith immediately picked out a good spot for a gristmill near what became the first lock of the Blackstone Canal. His family were to prosper there for many generations, eventually going into textiles. John Smith, Jr. later married Sarah, daughter of John Whipple. The Whipples had been friends of the Smiths in Dorchester. Whipple was licensed to run an “ordinary” or tavern.

Others moved down the following summer. William Harris had come over with Williams on the Lyon. Harris was described as an “actor or commedian, an impudent Morris dancer” from Kent; most likely one of those fellows who hung around the Globe Theatre in Southwark where Shakespeare put on his plays. He did not fit in well at Providence, nor did he think much of calling the Indians “brother.” Within a couple of years Williams took him to court, saying that he “would not yield subjection to any human order amongst men on freedom of conscience.” Harris could read and fancied himself a smart lawyer, so he always talked himself out of charges against him. He and Williams later made up, and Harris became a substantial property owner.

There were others who were a cross to Williams. After John Greene came down from Salem in 1635, he went back to settle his affairs there, and was fined 30 Pounds for talking against the Bay Colony. Williams did not think much of that kind of talk. He wanted to stay on as good terms as possible with the leaders there. He got Greene’s fine remitted on condition that he stay out of Massachusetts; probably through the influence of Gov. Winthrop, always sympathetic to Williams.

ARNOLD. William Arnold was born in Cheselbourne, Dorsetshire, northeast of Dorchester. He was forty-eight when he came to Hingham, and three years older when he got a deed from Williams to land at Pawtuxet. With him were his wife Christian and her parents the Thomas Peakes, all from the same town. In 1638 they all moved down, with young Stephen Arnold aged sixteen, to join the older brother Benedict. Within a few years they extended their holdings south to include Shawomet, and with the family connections took over most of Warwick.

Mrs. Hutchinson, who had her own particular following, was banned from Boston with Williams, and began preaching “The Word” with him to the Indians. When she insisted, however, that there would be no resurrection of the body, the Indians cried out “no, no, they would never believe it.” She and her brood of twelve ended up in Fairfield, Connecticut, where she was killed by the very Indians she tried so desperately to “save.”

Such then were the founders of Providence. It was incorporated in 1640 and given its name. There were thirty-eight families in all. Although Providence had no charter, it
considered itself a colony. One of its first acts was to admit Quakers, although Williams did not like their “discourteous behavior.”

The Arnolds had set up their own self-governing community on Warwick Neck, theoretically under the jurisdiction of Providence. In 1641 a group of people from Plymouth lead by Samuel Gorton [11], a London tailor of strong religious convictions, started their own little settlement at Shawomet in the middle of Arnold territory. William Arnold, going around Williams, complained to Boston that “under the pretense of liberty of conscience, about these parts there come to live all the scum, the runaways of the country.” Boston said they were outside its jurisdiction, but suggested that Arnold’s group come in with the Bay Colony, which they did the following year. This small enclave was to last sixteen years, with Arnold feeding back information on Providence, for which he was paid in grain and money.

Gorton got disgusted and went back to London. In 1658 he returned with a strong letter of protest from the Earl of Warwick, an ardent Puritan and sponsor of the Providence settlement. It put Arnold in his place and forced Massachusetts to back out. In gratitude Gorton called the settlement Warwick.

Stephen Arnold [9] was the son of William and younger brother of Benedict by seven years. He married Sarah, daughter of Edward Smith, when he was twenty-two. Like brothers of other politicians in modern times, Stephen was the sort who had to be looked out for. The family got him a license to set up as a tavern keeper. In 1663 he was ordered by the Court to take back a barrel of pork he had paid his taxes with, as “it was not merchantable when he brought it in.” In spite of this he was Deputy from 1664 to 1690, and Governor’s Assistant from 1672 to 1698 after brother Benedict became governor. Stephen did well enough to buy about 1,000 acres in the Pawtuxet area. The family biographies have us descended from Benedict, but Stephen was the grandfather.

Stephen Arnold, Jr. [8] married Mary Sheldon, daughter of John Sheldon [9], when he was thirty-eight. Like his parents they had eight children. He continued to run his father’s tavern; and when he died at the age of sixty-six, he left an estate of 608 Pounds, which included an unspecified amount of rum and all the usual farm animals. Their daughter Christian married William Fenner [7], son of Thomas Fenner III, of the other leading Rhode Island family.

They all sided with William Arnold when Pawtuxet threw in its lot with the Bay Colony in 1642, and afterward were a strong base for Benedict Arnold when he ran for the governorship of the new Colony of Rhode Island. They became the most influential family in the colony for many generations; supplying three governors and several military leaders including a later Benedict who went over to the British during the American Revolution because he did not get the military promotion he thought he served.

SHELDON. John Sheldon [9] was a cordwainer or tanner in Providence. He married Joan when he was thirty. His oldest boy became a cooper; a fast growing business as the sugar and molasses trade expanded with the West Indies. Another son followed his father’s trade. A third ran a successful farm and left an estate of 1,171 Pounds, including
a gold necklace valued at 16 Pounds and books valued at 10 Pounds. The fourth son was licensed to keep a public house, and left a "mansion house," meaning a two story house.

Mary Sheldon was the only daughter, and married Stephen Arnold, Jr. [8]. Her sister Elizabeth married William Carpenter.

Carpenter. Richard Carpenter [11], as well as his children William and Fridgwith, lived in Amesbury, Wiltshire. William with his wife and eight children came to Providence before going on to live at Oyster Bay, Long Island. Fridgwith stayed on in Amesbury, where she married John Vincent [10]. When Richard died William inherited the English property under the law of primogeniture, but deeded it to his sister.

Vincent. John Vincent [10] and Fridgwith sent their two oldest children William and Joan over to Providence with their Uncle William. There Joan married John Sheldon [9].

Portsmouth

The Portsmouth Compact may rightly be called the first charter of religious liberty anywhere in the world. Drawn by John Clarke and his fellow Baptists in 1638, it called for a "State where no constraint should ever be put upon the human conscience, no shackles upon the human spirit, and no limit to the freedom of human thought." Even the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, drawn the following year, were not as broad. Freedom of thought, rather than property rights, was the chief concern of the Portsmouth group.

Clarke. John Clarke, Sr. [13] lived in Wallops, Bedfordshire where he married Catherine Cook. His son Thomas [12] lived in Westhorpe, East Suffolk, the home of Mary Tudor, daughter of King Henry VII. She married the Duke of Suffolk after being for a short time Queen of France. Thomas married Rose Kerrich (or Kerridge) of Saxtead, another small village some miles to the east. The five Clarke sons, Carew, John, Jeremiah, Joseph [11] and Thomas, Jr., seem to have been in Westhorpe too. Carew inherited his father's property and remained in England, but the other boys with their sister Mary all came to Boston in 1637. John was twenty-eight and Joseph the youngest nineteen. John had graduated from Leyden University and was learned in Greek, Latin and Hebrew. He was a friend of two staunch Puritan leaders, Oliver Cromwell and the poet John Milton. John was to marry three times, but left no surviving children. The brothers took sides with Mrs. Hutchinson, and were thus made unwelcome in Boston, which then had a population of about 1,000.

In the spring of 1638 John went down to Providence to see Roger Williams seeking a place for their own little group separate from the others there. Williams suggested that he and Clarke go to Plymouth to see if the island of Aquidneck were part of that colony.
People had begun to call it the Isle of Rhodes or Rhode Island; named for the Rhodes family who had recently settled to the north of the island on the Bristol peninsular. The two were told that it was within no one's bounds, so Clarke went back to Boston to get his group organized. There with much advice from ex-Governor Vane he drew up the Portsmouth Compact; the name they had chosen for their settlement to be located at Pocasset.

On March 7, 1638 nineteen people signed the document in Boston; including, John Clarke, his brother Joseph, Richard Borden, John Greenman, William Hall, Thomas Hazard, George Lawton, Anthony Paine, Nathaniel Potter and John Tripp. Another signer was William Coddington, a successful merchant in Boston, who was chosen “Judge” of the Court or governing body. He had been Governor's Assistant in the Bay Colony, and for several years its Treasurer. Coddington was to prove as personally ambitious as Arnold, but much less adept as a politician. John Clarke was chosen the religious leader or Elder.

Through the offices of Roger Williams, Aquidneck was bought from Canonicus and Miantonomo for forty fathoms of white peage (wampum), ten coats and twenty hoes; to be paid to the local Indians to move out of Pocasset, and five fathoms of wampum to the local sachems. Boston authorities refused them any supplies, since the Compact included all dissenting Christian sects as well as Jews and Pagans. The group was forced to enter into a treaty with the Dutch on Manhattan for provisions and supplies. Lumber was their first export. Trade was soon extended to Virginia, from whence they brought in the already popular tobacco. Williams up in Providence said it helped his epileptic son. They were all against liquor as a “curse” to the Indians, but it was imported just the same.

The original Compact was noble in purpose but short on specific rules for running the settlement. A new revised one was drawn up which provided that the Judge and Elders should be the executive body with the Judge having two votes. This revised pact was signed by Coddington and two of the Clarkes, for a total of twenty-three, mostly new names. These are listed on the monument later set up at Portsmouth by people who seemed unaware of the original Compact.

Not surprisingly there was soon dissention in this new larger group. On April 28, 1639 John Clarke and eight others signed the Newport Compact and moved down the island to Newport, where they established the first Baptist Church with Clarke as Pastor. Coddington, a Quaker, and the others stayed in Portsmouth.

Discussions were then started with Providence about getting a Royal Charter for all the groups in Rhode Island. In 1642 plans were made for Williams to go to London, but by then the Civil War had started in England. When the New England Confederacy was formed in 1643, Williams applied for membership. It was refused on the grounds that his was not a legitimate colony. The real reason was that the other colonies did not want a bunch of radicals associated with them.
Finally in 1644 Williams took off for London, where he got his Charter from Charles I, distracted by the Civil War. The new colony was named Providence Plantations, and included all the Narragansett country west to the Pawcatuck River; thus overriding Connecticut and Massachusetts claims to the western part. Again Williams applied for membership in the Confederacy. This time it was denied on account of the Charter provision that put the General Court or Legislature over its Executive. They said that Providence Plantations should become part of either the Bay Colony or Plymouth, which the Bay was already planning to take over.

In 1647 a civil government called the General Assembly was established, embracing all of Rhode Island. Coddington the former "Judge" of Portsmouth appeared to go along, but in 1649 without telling anyone of his purpose, went to London. In the confusion there just after the execution of Charles I, he got a separate charter just for Aquidneck Island. When he came back with it, the people were outraged.

By 1651 the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell was well established. Roger Williams and John Clarke left for London to get an even stronger charter from the Puritan government, which they assumed would be more sympathetic. The first thing they did was to get Coddington's charter revoked. Since Aquidneck now had a larger population than Providence, the colony was named Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations; a name it still bears today.

Williams stayed on in London until 1654, and then decided to come home and leave Clarke in charge of the negotiations. Clarke remained in London for a total of thirteen years earning his living by teaching, preaching and doctoring. Cromwell died in 1658 and Charles II came to the throne in 1660. Thus a new complication was added. As soon as Williams came back, Benedict Arnold moved across the bay from Warwick to Newport to establish a stronger base. There were then forty-two families in Providence, thirty-eight in Warwick, seventy-one in Portsmouth and ninety-five in Newport. Benedict Arnold was elected Commissioner from 1654 to 1663, and Governor's Assistant from 1655 to 1661.

Clarke's jockeying with John Winthrop, Jr. is covered in the chapter on New London. Finally Clarke's own charter was signed and sealed. It established a "State where no constraint could ever be put upon the human conscience, and no limit to freedom of human thought"; the same words he had written in 1638. There could be no Royal veto. It established a truly independent colony. One wonders if Charles II, with all his other problems, more than glanced at the parchment.

Clarke was voted 100 Pounds for his thirteen years work. Benedict Arnold, having anticipated the new charter, was elected governor of the colony; a position he held until his death in 1678 at the age of sixty-three. When Rhode Island once more applied for membership in the United Colonies, it was again turned down. John Winthrop, Jr., Governor of Connecticut, was serving as head of the federation, and would not consider it. It was not until after the King Philip's War of 1676, when old Governor Winthrop in Massachusetts, insisting that they all owed so much to Roger Williams, forced the
acceptance of Rhode Island. Even then, Winthrop, Sr. could not get the Commissioners to restore Williams’ civil rights in the Bay Colony.

SEVENTH-DAY BAPTISTS. While John Clarke was still in London, his little flock at Newport including his brother Joseph became involved in still another controversy. In 1654 some members of his Baptist Church, citing the Old Testament which called for the seventh day to be a day of rest, claimed that Saturday should be the Sabbath Day, rather than Sunday. They began using the Meetinghouse for their new Sabbath. Feelings grew more intense, but there seemed to be no resolution. The “First-Day” Baptists held that the Ten Precepts, as they called the Ten Commandments, were for Jews only as it applied to the Sabbath Day. The Seventh-Day people, like good Fundamentalists, insisted that they were only following the words of the Bible. Otherwise they held the same beliefs as the other Baptists. They were in no way connected with the later Seventh-Day Adventists, who believed in the imminent return of Christ.

Ten years later after John Clarke had returned from London, Stephen Mumford arrived from the little Seventh-Day group which had been meeting in Bell Lane, London. Mumford claimed that an anti-Christian power had changed the Sabbath from the original seventh day. Actually the Emperor Constantine, having made Christianity the religion of ancient Rome, declared Sunday the Sabbath in memory of Christ’s resurrection. An appeal was made to Roger Williams, himself a First-Day Baptist. He pleased neither side by telling them that there was nothing in the scriptures setting a particular day for the Sabbath; that one day was like another as far as God was concerned.

Samuel Hubbard, who had become a Baptist back in Wethersfield, was preaching to the little group on Noodle’s Island, East Boston. When he brought them over to the Seventh-Day Church, it was too much for the Boston authorities. “The Governor and Council of Massachusetts Bay, accounting themselves bound by the law of God and the Commonwealth to protect the Churches of Christ from the intrusion hereby made upon their peace in the ways of Godliness,” had the Noodle’s island people thrown into prison. In April of 1668 they sent word to the parent church in Newport to send debaters for “full and fair debate” with ministers chosen by the Court. The Seventh-Day people could not be persuaded to “leave off their heresy” and were ordered to leave the colony. This they would not do, but continued “greatly straightened in their circumstances.”

In 1671 seventeen years after the division started, the Seventh-Day people in Newport took the final step and broke away to set up their own church. They were nine in number. William Hiscox was named Pastor, the others being Roger Bastor, old John Clarke, John Crandall [11] who had married the daughter of Samuel Gorton [11] across the bay in Warwick, Samuel Hubbard [11] and his wife Tacy, Stephen Mumford, Rachel Langworthy, and a sister unknown.

In 1676 right after the end of the King Philip’s War, Hubbard and Elder Joseph Crandall, John’s son, went to New London to preach and baptize people into the Seventh-Day Baptist Church. The Rev. Mr. Bradstreet, the Congregational minister, had them arrested. Hubbard then sixty-six said to Bradstreet, “You are a young man, but I am an
old planter (settler) of about forty years, a beginner of Connecticut and I have been persecuted for my conscience from this colony, and I can assure you that the old beginners were not for persecution, but we had liberty at first." It was not for some years that the First-Day Baptists were allowed in New London; only after the Averys and Morgans made them respectable in Groton.

CRANSTON and WARWICK

FENNER. The Fenners were one of the earliest families in Rhode Island, but the first one Thomas Fenner [11] settled in Branford, Connecticut. He and his family came from Atta Fenn Farm near Horley, Sussex. George Fenner of the same generation as Thomas was captain of the Lion against the Spanish Armada. Thomas' son Arthur [10] remained in England for several years after the rest of the family came over, but when he arrived, both father and son moved to Providence. Thomas traded with the Indians, and in his old age moved back to Branford where the family kept a trading post. When he died in 1647 he left an estate of some 60 Pounds, which included a boat, Dutch money, beaver skins and other trading goods.

Arthur Fenner had served several years in Cromwell's army, where he became a lieutenant. He was about twenty-seven when he bought land in Cranston outside of Providence, later increased to over 500 acres. There he married Sarah Brown, sister of Henry Brown who bought meadowland at Netuaconkonit with Fenner. Arthur's first house built about 1662 was burned by the Indians when they attacked Providence during King Philip's War in 1675. His new house, called "Fenner's Castle," was a landmark for many generations, much like the "Hive of the Averys" in Groton. His children were born there, and three of them became grandparents; namely, Arthur Fenner, Jr., Thomas Fenner II and Sarah who married Robert Lay [11] of Lyme. As a surveyor trained in the army, Arthur was appointed to lay out the bounds of the Plantation, and to "put in order and have printed the statutes of the colony" after being named a Governor's Assistant; a position he held for nineteen years. Except for Massachusetts, the Governor's Council, or Assistants, eventually became the State Senates in the other colonies. Arthur was also Moderator of the Town Council longer than any other. After the American Revolution three of his descendents became Governor.

At the time of 1675 War Arthur was made Captain and put in command of the King's Garrison at Wickford, halfway down the Bay toward Point Judith. Here, he and twenty-seven others "staid and went not away" while the rest of the community fled to Providence and Aquidneck Island. For this, in lieu of pay, the officers were awarded a captive Indian each as a bound servant for a certain number of years. Others so recompensed were: Roger Williams, Nathan Waterman, Thomas Fenner II, Daniel Abbott, Jr., John Whipple, Thomas Arnold and William Harris, Jr.

Thomas Fenner II [9] followed in his father's footsteps becoming an Assistant, Deputy and member of the Town Council for many years. He eventually outranked his
father becoming “Major of the Main.” He married Dinah Borden, daughter of Thomas Borden [10].

Arthur Fenner, Jr. [9], brother of Thomas II, settled in Warwick and kept a trading post with his own vessel. His wife was Mary Smith of the mill Smiths on the north side of Providence. Their son Edward Fenner [8] married Amy Borden, niece of his uncle Thomas Fenner’s wife. Their son Arthur III [7] married a widow like his father, Rachel Corp, daughter of John Corp III [8], and lived on a farm at Scituate, now under the reservoir. Their daughter Mary married Stephen Fenner [6], a third cousin.

Back in Cranston Thomas Fenner III [8], son of Thomas II, lived for a time in his grandfather’s “Castle.” During the Revolution Washington and Lafayette were entertained there by his descendents. He remained a farmer. Generally speaking, with the fourth generation [8] the family divided into the political Fenners and the farmer-trader Fenners. Except for one cross-marriage we are descended from the Scituate farmers. Thomas III married Mary Abbott, daughter of Daniel Abbott, Jr. [9].

There is a story of the last Fenner governor who met a Baptist minister cousin one day. The Reverend said he had been visiting the jail. When asked which jail he replied to the Governor, “If you were where you should be, you would not have to ask.”

One of Thomas III sons William Fenner [7] lived on the Cranston farm. He married Christian Arnold, daughter of Stephen Arnold, Jr. [8]. It was their son Stephen Fenner [6] who married his third cousin Mary, and went to live on her parents’ farm in Scituate. After serving as a private in the Pawtuxet Rangers during the Revolution, he was one of the first generation to go “West,” and died in Fairfield, Herkimer County, New York in 1826. Mary died near there in Newport, north of Utica in 1840. Their son Philip Arnold Fenner [5], born on the farm in Scituate in 1792, was the first of the family to leave the farm and learn the machinist trade at the start of the Industrial Revolution.

ABBOTT. Daniel Abbott [10] with his wife Mary and son Daniel, Jr. landed in New Towne (Cambridge) in 1630, and after living for a time in Portsmouth, went to Providence in 1639. They soon moved down to Warwick and took up a farm. When he died in 1647 he left some meadowland and goats.

Daniel Abbott, Jr. [9] left the farm as a boy and became a servant to Robert Williams, one of Roger Williams’ sons. When Robert died, having bought the little house in Providence of Daniel, Sr., he left it to young Daniel, Jr. Thirteen years later in 1678 Daniel, Jr., by then a widower, married the widow Margaret Walling (White) and built a new house. About a year later he wrote to Roger Williams complaining about the taxes. He served several years as Town Clerk and one year as Deputy.

Nothing is known about the first wife of Daniel, Jr., but the year after he remarried, his daughter Mary married Arthur Fenner III. When Daniel died in 1709, he left his son Daniel III responsible for stepmother Margaret, but he neglected his charge and she was forced to apply to the town for relief. They gave her 8 shillings a week. Daniel III had married Mary Fenner, a member of the political Fenner family, and went on to be Deputy Governor himself. When he died in 1759 he left an estate of 3,928 Pounds, with 30
Pounds for the establishment of the Congregational Church in Providence. Old Margaret was long since dead.

**BORDEN. Richard Borden** [11] was another of Cromwell's soldiers, and one of the original signers of the Portsmouth Compact. In 1653 he was on a committee to decide what position the colony should take regarding the Dutch on the east half of Long Island. It had been settled largely by people from Connecticut and Rhode Island, but was claimed by New York after it took over New York State from the Dutch. The two older colonies considered making claims to that part of the island, but New York kept it in the end. In 1667 *Borden* bought from the Indians in New Jersey a tract of land south of Red Bank which later became a Seventh-Day Baptist settlement. He left an estate of 1,572 Pounds in Providence and New London where he had a shipping business.

*Thomas Borden* [10] married *Mary Harris*, daughter of the "impudent Morris dancer." *Thomas* was one of ten children, so his father's estate must have been spread pretty thin. His own estate came to about 95 Pounds. His daughter *Dinah* married *Thomas Fenner II*, the Major.

*Richard Borden II* [9] was himself one of eight children, and seems to have had a hard go of it on his farm. His wife is unknown. Their daughter *Amy* was a widow of Thorton when she married *Edward Fenner* [8], nephew of the same *Thomas Fenner II*.

**CORP. John Corp** [10] and his wife *Deliverance* came to Warwick, where their first son *John, Jr.* was born in 1680. The next year they moved to Bristol on the peninsular north of Aquidneck, settled by the Rhodes family. Their other son *Hope*, named after the motto of the colony, was the first white child born in that town. He married a Rhodes.

When *John Corp* died in 1691 in early middle-age, his house, orchard and two acre house lot were valued at 45 Pounds, a 10 acre lot at 40 Pounds and "commonage" at 5 Pounds. Two acres were legally the size of a house lot. Instead of property, his wife was left an income of 7 Pounds 35 Shillings a year, and use of the house. Two years before he died *Corp* was appointed poundkeeper, gravedigger and Sexton of the Meetinghouse; the rate to be decided by the Selectmen. After his death his widow was given the job of Sexton and Bell Ringer at 3 Pounds a year. She later married John Gereardy.

*John Corp, Jr.* [9] lived in Providence with his wife *Patience*, who inherited her father's farm at Mashantatuck valued at 120 Pounds. It seems to have been located in East Greenwich on the Bay below Warwick. She deeded the farm to their son *John III* [8] the year he was married. His wife is unknown, but their daughter *Rachel* married *Arthur Fenner III* after her first husband Westcott died.

**WESTERLY**

In 1658 a group from Newport got permission from the Rhode Island authorities to
settle in the southwest corner of the colony in an area called Misquamicut, now more or less the town of Westerly. All but one were Seventh-Day Baptists. The leader was the Rev. Hugh Mosher. The others included: James Babcock and his son John, Joseph Clarke, John Crandall, Edward Greenman, George Lawton, John Maxson, Ichabod Potter and John Randall. On June 29, 1660 the land was bought from the Narragansett chief Sosoa or Socho, nephew of Canonicus and Miantonomo. In March of 1661 seventy-six people, headed by Mosher, signed Articles of Agreement setting up a joint stock company with a total of eighteen shares at 5 Pounds each. Mosher bought a full share, the others fractions. Payment was to be made in wheat and Indian corn at a fixed rate. In August they petitioned and received from the General Court a confirmation of title, and the cost per share was raised to 8 Pounds.

In 1656 however, two brash souls Tobias (Toby) Saunders [11] and Robert Burdick [10], a son-in-law of Samuel Hubbard the refugee from Connecticut, jumped the gun and built houses on the shore of the Pawcatuck River down toward Avondale. The area was inhabited by Pequot Indians from Mystic under Cashawasset, known as Harmon Garrett. The Pequots, assuming that they were under Connecticut jurisdiction since that colony claimed as far east as Weekapaug, complained to Hartford that the English would not let them hunt or fish. To strengthen its claim Connecticut authorities hauled Saunders and Burdick off to Hartford, and the matter was put to the United Colonies Court. The two were let go until the boundary was settled.

In 1658 to the dismay of both Connecticut and Rhode Island, the area east of the Pawcatuck as well as the whole of the Stonington area was awarded to Massachusetts. The Pequots complained again; this time to the towns of New London and to Southington, the new town that Massachusetts set up covering the whole area in dispute. Although Captains George Denison and James Avery spoke up for Indians, nothing was decided.

In 1661 seven members of the Misquamicut Company drew for house lots farther up the river at Hopkinton Bridge, which became the first site of Westerly. Only Joseph Clarke, Jr. [10], brother-in-law of Burdick, joined Saunders and Burdick to become the first acknowledged settlers in the town of Misquamicut, which later was called Westerly. Again Saunders and Burdick were arrested, this time by Massachusetts, and taken to Boston. Clarke was not included, possibly because he was a clergyman. It seems apparent that territorial claims, not the fate of the Indians, was the governing factor. Rhode Island was notified that the two men had been fined 40 Pounds; and would be held until the fine was paid, plus 100 Pounds security for “peaceable demeanor.” The next spring Gov. Winthrop, Jr. of Connecticut came back from London with his new charter establishing his colony’s boundary as far east as the “Narragansett River,” and the two men were released. In 1663 when “Narragansett River” was interpreted to mean the Pawcatuck River, they at last found themselves safely in Rhode Island. Others of the Company moved in, and in 1680 built their Meetinghouse on the site of the Hopkinton Cemetery. The town of Westerly was incorporated in 1669.

Gov. Winthrop, Jr. however had not let the matter drop. He had complained in 1667 and again in 1669, whereupon Saunders and the Rev. John Crandall answered for
Misquamicut:

"We are very sensible of great wrongs that we have sustained for several years. As for your advice, to agree with our neighbors in Stonington, and the other gentlemen, we hope that your colony and ours will in the first place lovingly agree, and then we question not but there will be agreement between us and our neighbors in Stonington."

Soft words got them nowhere. They were Seventh-Day Baptists, anathema in Connecticut.

CRANDALL. John Crandall [10] was one of the original nine people who established the Seventh-Day Church at Newport in 1671, which included the people living in Westerly. In 1670 and 1671 after the new town was incorporated, he served as Deputy to the Rhode Island General Court and Elder of the Church. He had married the daughter of Samuel Gorton [11], the opponent of the Arnolds in Warwick. In January of 1671 money was appropriated for Crandall to go to Hartford to resolve the territorial dispute. His instructions were to go by boat down the Bay from Providence to Monagansett and from there to hire Sarah Reape’s horse to go to Hartford; which he did in May. He was apprehended on arrival and put in "durance." Winthrop was not about to even admit the existence of Rhode Island. Crandall wrote to his governor asking whether to give bond or stay in jail. The General Court sent word “Stay in jail and we will pay your charges.” All Crandall had with him was 20 Shillings expense money from the Court and 35 Shillings from individuals. Some time later he was released.

This was the same John Crandall who had gone to Swampscott twenty years before with John Clarke and Obediah Holmes to visit Brother Witter. At the outbreak of King Philip’s War in 1675, “ill with ague and fever” he fled with the others back to Newport, and died the next year. Westerly remained deserted for several years after that.

Joseph Crandall [9] married Deborah Burdick, daughter of Robert Burdick, and became an Elder of the Church like his father. It was Joseph who went to New London in 1676 with Samuel Hubbard to protest against the Congregational Church civil authority and was arrested by the Rev. Bradstreet.

The Crandall’s daughter Deborah married George Stillman, Jr. [9]. Brother James Crandall [9] also had a daughter Deborah who married Joseph Clarke IV [8]. The old Crandall house in Rhode Island is still standing, and is still in the Crandall family.

MOSHER. Stephen Mosher [12] lived in Manchester, England. His son Ensign Hugh Mosher [11] was born in Falmouth, England in 1603. Like so many of the Puritan emigrants, he fought with Cromwell’s army in the Low Countries. He and his wife, who may have been Lydia Maxson, came to Boston in 1632 on the ship Jane. Their son Hugh, Jr. was born there in 1633, and daughter Mary in 1641. They all came down to Newport in 1652. Mary married Elder John Maxson [10] about 1666, and Hugh, Jr. became the first Seventh-Day pastor in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. He took part in the 1675 War and lost two sons in the Great Swamp Fight.
BABCOCK. James Babcock [11] was born in the county of Essex in 1612, and became a blacksmith and gunsmith. He and his wife Sarah were in Portsmouth in 1642, where he was on the Court of Commissioners from 1656 to 1659. Their oldest son James, Jr. married Jane, daughter of Nicholas Brown.

John Babcock [10], another son, was born in Portsmouth in 1644 and followed the same trade as his father. As a boy he worked on George Lawton's farm, and while still a young fellow married Mary Lawton. The young couple moved to their own place on Mastuxet Cove near the north end of Aquidneck. They preceeded to raise children as well as crops, having ten before John died at the age of forty-one. Both father and son moved to the town of Westerly soon after the first three families and built a farmhouse down the river. When John died in 1685 he named his oldest son James II as guardian of the four minor children, including one who was a hopeless invalid. Unlike Connecticut the law of primogeniture still held in Rhode Island, so James II inherited everything. However, he deeded half the estate to his mother. In 1678 the Babcocks were baptized into the Seventh-Day Church, including old grandfather James who died the next year.

George Babcock [9], John's fourth son, did not inherit, so he went to work on the farm of William Hall, Jr. [10] at Kingston. Like his father before him George married the boss's daughter Elizabeth Hall in 1694. Eleven years later they and twenty-six others bought the Shannock Purchase around the headwaters of the Pawcatuck River in the present town of Richmond. The Babcocks built on the south side of Shannock Hill, with their land running down to the river along Beaver River. Like his father before him George was a Deputy to the General Court. He did well with the farm; for when he died in 1751 at the age of seventy-eight, he left 300 Pounds to the Seventh-Day Church, and farmland and money to his five children. His daughter Mary married Thomas Potter, Jr.

In later years when Swamp Yankees turned from farming to manufacturing, many of the Seventh-Day people of Westerly took the lead. The Babcock Printing Press Company, later owned by George P. Fenner, was for many years the leader in its field, starting with a Gold Medal at the Crystal Palace in London in 1855. Babcock and Wilcox became the most famous boiler makers in the world, and continued to grow.

BURDICK. Robert Burdick [10] was the claim jumper with Toby Saunders, and his descendents remained farmers for many generations. They were among the first to go West, and many small cemeteries throughout Indiana, Illinois and neighboring states are dotted with Burdick stones. Of Robert's ten children, three became my grandparents; Deborah who married Joseph Crandall, Tacy who married Joseph Maxson, and Benjamin whose daughter Molly married George Stillman III.

CLARKE. Joseph Clarke [11] was one of the four brothers who came to Portsmouth in 1638, and the only one to leave children. He and his wife Margaret had ten, six of them boys. While his older brother John was spending thirteen years in London getting a charter for Rhode Island, Joseph became the spiritual leader of the community,
and one of the founders of the Seventh-Day Baptist Church in Newport. Later he was the first pastor of the church in Hopkinton, later Westerly. For seven years he was Governor’s Assistant from Newport, and for two more years from Westerly. He was also Deputy for several years, dying in office at the age of seventy-two.

Joseph Clarke, Jr. [10] was eighteen when he took one of the first lots in Westerly, and married Bethia Hubbard, daughter of Samuel Hubbard. Clarke’s house was about two miles west of the Hopkinton Cemetery on the Pawcatuck. Like his father he became Pastor of the Church, but proved to be as scrappy as his brother-in-law Robert Burdick and his uncle Toby Saunders. As late as 1680 the three were taken to Hartford on orders of Gov. Winthrop, who still would not give up his Connecticut claim to Westerly. This was twenty-four years after Burdick and Saunders had been arrested the first time. They were fined 10 Pounds and costs, which the Rhode Island General Court paid, but by this time the Rhode Island claim was well established. Clarke’s daughter Judith married John Maxson, Jr. [9] and his son Joseph III [9] married John’s sister Dorothy. Another son Benjamin and his wife Mary had a daughter Sarah who married Edward Greenman III [8].

Joseph Clarke IV [8], son of Joseph III, married Deborah Crandall and their daughter Molly married John Stillman [8]. After three generations, there were only cousins left to marry.

GREENMAN. John Greenman [11] came to Dorchester in 1631 and was in Taunton in 1636, where he was a cooper. With his two sons David and Edward [10] he came to Portsmouth in 1638, and was one of the Compact signers. Both boys were wheelwrights, and this training and ability as mechanics led in later generations to the trade of shipbuilding. The Greenmans moved down to Newport in 1655, and to Westerly with the other Seventh-Day people.

Edward Greenman, Jr. [9] was born in Westerly, but lived for some time on a farm in Kingston. He was Deputy for several terms, and Speaker during his second term. By the time he was forty-five he could buy 250 acres from the Wordens for 415 Pounds. When he died at the age of eighty-six, he left the farm to his second son Edward III, with wife Mary having the life use. Edward, Jr.’s two married daughters were to get 10 Shillings each after Mary died, and for some reason his older son Silas got the same. Later in life Edward moved to a larger farm in Charlestown, Rhode Island, and may be buried in Wequetequock, Stonington. In 1669 twenty years after Edward’s death, the boys sold the negro “Southwick” his freedom for 26 Pounds.

Edward Greenman III [8] was born in South Kingston, and after his marriage to Sarah Clarke, also moved to Charlestown. Their daughter Abigail married David Maxson.

Later Greenmans, George and Silas III in Westerly, went into partnership in 1827 in a shipyard with Silas E. Burrows in Old Mystic. There is a story that George used to walk back and forth to Westerly barefooted to save shoe leather. Silas continued in Westerly, and George took his brothers Clark and Thomas into partnership. In 1838 with orders for larger ships, they moved their business down the river to Adams Point, now the site of
Mystic Seaport. Their most famous of several clipper ships the David Crockett, 1679 tons, was built in 1853. When the days of wooden ships passed, the family started the Greenmanville Manufacturing Company to make woolen goods. My wife Emily is the great-granddaughter of George.

LAWTON. George Lawton [10] was another signor of the Portsmouth Compact along with Thomas Hazard [11], father of Lawton’s wife Elizabeth. Lawton owned an interest in the Misquamicut Purchase, but did not move there. Before the 1675 War, representatives of the settlements at Portsmouth and Newport held a Council of War at Lawton’s house. Fearing “treachery,” each town was ordered to post a guard of ten fully armed horsemen. Lawton was a Deputy all through the war period, and took a leading part in the colony’s defense.

In 1690 he and five other Governor’s Assistants wrote a letter of congratulation to William and Mary, newly succeeded to the English throne. At the same time they informed their Majesties that they had restored their original charter brought to them by John Clarke. It had been abrogated by Governor Andros under James II when he put all the New England colonies under his direct rule. It was at that time that the Connecticut Charter had been hidden in a hollow oak tree. Andros later became governor of Virginia, which was more amenable to London rule.

When Lawton died in 1693 he left an estate of 790 Pounds, including a negro boy, two Indian men and an Indian girl. He was buried in his orchard at Portsmouth. There were ten children, including Mary, who married John Babcock.

MAXSON. Richard Maxson [11] was born in England, probably of Norse descent, as the name was originally spelled Magsson. He and his wife Goodwife came to Boston with their ten year old son Richard, Jr. in 1634 and joined the Baptist Church there. Maxson went to work as a blacksmith for James Everill (sometimes spelled Averill or Averye). The next year he was exiled along with Roger Williams and other Baptists. Instead of going to Providence or the Connecticut River, the Maxsons got together a small group and sailed up Long Island Sound to Throg’s Neck in Fairfield to a spot afterward called Maxson’s Point. They began trading with the local Indians, and probably with the Dutch on Manhattan. After the Pequots were defeated at Mystic in 1637, some found their way to the same area. Things had gone well enough with the Maxson group the first year or so, but one day none of the Indians came in. Upon being asked why not, they replied that they were afraid of the dogs. That night the dogs were chained up. The Indians attacked, burning the houses and killing some of the people. The rest managed to escape to their shallop anchored offshore. The next morning a few of the men, including fourteen year old Richard, Jr., went ashore to salvage what tools they could, and vegetables from the garden. The Indians sprang out of ambush and killed them. Richard and his pregnant wife sailed off to Portsmouth on Aquidneck.

In the spring of that year, 1638, son John was born, the first white child in Rhode Island. Richard resumed his blacksmith trade. The next year he was “detected for his
oppression in the way of his trade, but promised amendment and satisfaction.” His business did well, in spite of competition, and by the spring of 1640 he owned thirty-six acres.

John Maxson [10] grew up in the Church. When the Seventh-Day people split off from the First-Day Baptists in Newport, he joined them. He was twenty-three when he bought an interest in the Misquamicut Purchase, but did not move there until 1668 after marrying Mary Mosher, daughter of the organizer. In Newport he was an Elder of the Church. After moving to Westerly, he continued as an Elder and became the first Pastor when the Westerly Church split off from Newport in 1708. He held various other positions such as Overseer of the Poor and Deputy for many years, except for the period from 1675 to 1680 when Westerly was evacuated. Four of his six children married grandchildren of Samuel Hubbard.

John Maxson, Jr. [9] was born in Westerly in 1667, and taken by his parents to Newport during the Indian War. There he married Judith Clarke in 1688. Back in Westerly he became one of the two Elders under his father. The other was Thomas Hiscox. When Maxson’s father died in 1720, John, Jr. became the Pastor. In 1710 he and others had bought “Maxson’s Purchase,” a 2,684 acre tract near Westerly. He lived like his father to be eighty-one years old. Daughter Bethia married her first cousin Joseph Maxson, Jr. [8].

Joseph Maxson [9] was a brother of John, Jr. He married Tacy Burdick, daughter of Robert Burdick. When Joseph was a young man he was ordained “evangelistic or travelling minister.” In 1739 at the age of sixty-seven, he was elected an Elder, and became Pastor in 1747 at the age of seventy-five upon the death of his brother John, Jr. Joseph died three years later. His pastorate was “disturbed” by the New Light development, a revivalism gone wild.

Joseph Maxson, Jr. [8] like his father, uncle and grandfather, became Pastor of the Church. He married Bethia Maxson, daughter of his uncle John, Jr. In the fall of 1742 Joseph, Jr., then aged fifty, set sail with his family from Stonington for the Manasquam River in New Jersey where a Seventh-Day settlement had been started two years before. The place was called Squam or Shrovebury, now Shrewsbury. Nine year old daughter Content was with them. Their boat got caught in the ice in Long Island Sound, so they did not reach New Jersey until the following spring. It is not known how long they stayed, but Content married George Potter [7] eleven years later back in Westerly.

John Maxson III [8] was the son of John Maxson, Jr. He too was an Elder, and married Thankful Randall, daughter of Matthew Randall [9].

David Maxson [7], son of John III and Thankful, was forty-seven at the start of the American Revolution. In April 1776 he carried powder and lead in his oxcart from Providence to the patriots in Boston, and in June was appointed to run lead for bullets. He lived in Hopkinton on the side of the hill south of the Meetinghouse. After serving as Deputy for two terms under the new United States, he fell off a load of hay onto a pitchfork and was killed. All of his sons except Paul moved to Rensselaer County in New York.
RANDALL. John Randall [12] came from Clerkinwall, Middlesex. His son Nathaniel [11] was a baker in Boston. John Randall II [10] came to Westerly with Mosher's group in 1667. John II was one of those complained about the third time by Harmon Garrett, who now called himself “Governor of the Pequits.” This time his name was spelled Wecoscotte. The letter to Gov. Winthrop read, “Such men wear hats and clothes like Englishmen, but have dealt with us like wolves and bears.” About 1670 the Indians were removed to a reservation laid out in North Stonington, and fought with the English and Mohicans during King Philip’s War in 1675.

John II and his wife Elizabeth had a son Matthew [9]. He and his wife Eleanor had a daughter Thankful who married John Maxson III [8] in 1724.

TRIPP AND PAINE. John Tripp [11] also came to Portsmouth in 1638, and was a carpenter. The year before he had married Mary Paine, daughter of Anthony Paine [12] who came with his wife Rose Grinnell, a widow, to Portsmouth with the Tripps. Tripp bought Hog Island west of Portsmouth and gave it its name. It was a good place to keep hogs since it required no fencing. Their daughter Alice married William Hall, Jr. [10].

John Tripp, Jr. [10] was one of nine children. He inherited one half of his father’s house and Hog Island. As a young man he set up a mill on the stream at Silver Lake near Point Judith neck and married Susannah Anthony, daughter of John Anthony [11]. The Tripp’s daughter Susannah married Thomas Potter [10] and inherited her father’s “bell metal skillet.”

ANTHONY. John Anthony [11] came from Hempsted, Suffolk on the ship Hercules in 1634 and settled in Portsmouth with the first group. He was granted 10 acres by the town as “servant” and later bought 40 more acres. In 1641 he was made a Freeman and eligible to hold office, having acquired sufficient property. In 1655 he was licensed to keep a house of entertainment and sell liquor in his house, with instructions to put up a sign for the benefit of strangers. In 1661 he was elected a Commissioner. His wife was named Susannah. Their daughter Susannah married John Tripp, Jr. and inherited 4 Pounds a year for life from her parents.

HALL. William Hall [11] was another first comer to Portsmouth in 1638 and owned land on Aquidneck, Conanicut and Dutch Islands. He was a Deputy for several years and a Commissioner. When he drew his Will in 1673, he left to his “trust and well loved friend and yoke fellow” wife Mary the whole of his estate for life.

William Hall, Jr. [10], the second son, inherited 3 Pounds and some of the land. He married Alice Tripp and bought a house and twenty-six acres for 60 Pounds. His older brother Zuriah married Alice’s sister Elizabeth. The William Halls had nine children, so his estate of 84 Pounds did not go very far. Their daughter Elizabeth married George Babcock [9], who was working on the Hall farm in South Kingston.

POTTER. Nathaniel Potter [11] was about twenty-eight when he came to
Portsmouth with his wife Dorothy in 1638. They had three children before he died at thirty-four: Nathaniel, Jr., Ichabod and Elizabeth.


Thomas Potter [9] was twenty-four when he married Susannah Tripp, daughter of John Tripp, Jr. [10]. He moved down to Tripp's mill, but soon struck off on his own and built a mill near South Kingston. He was the first of a long line of Potter millers. The business prospered and he left an estate of 4,092 Pounds to his ten children. The estate included livestock, Negroes: "Harry" valued at 20 Pounds, "Scipio" 45 Pounds, "Simon" 85 Pounds, "Peso" 55 Pounds, and an Indian boy 16 Pounds. The first and third boys got the mill and farm. Thomas, Jr., the second son, got 300 Pounds.

Thomas Potter, Jr. [8] moved to Hopkinton "into the wilderness because South Kingston was a place noted for want of piety." From there he married Mary Babcock, whose father George Babcock [9] was already a successful miller up the Pawcatuck River at Shannock Hill. Young Thomas with his inheritance built a dam and mill near Hopkinton Bridge, which was torn down in 1762 to uncover the valuable meadowland above it. Then aged sixty-six, he moved to Potter Hill to be near his son.

George Potter [7] was born in Hopkinton and in 1754 at the age of twenty-two married Content Maxson, daughter of Joseph Maxson, Jr., the church Elder. Ten years later George moved to Westerly and hired a farm of Hezekiah Babcock until 1771. George was a go-getter and in that time was able to buy the gristmill and dam at Potter Hill built by Samuel Maxson and John Davis. He also bought up the sawmill, fulling mill and two houses. In 1663 he inherited his father's farm at Hopkinton Bridge. George was known as the "Honest Miller" and a friend notes that "he always gave everyone their fair measure, even to the last kernel of corn."

In 1777 when he was forty-five he enlisted in the Rhode Island Militia. That winter he spent at Valley Forge with his son George, Jr. and the "ragged, lousy, naked regiment." More than once the camp was without bread for three successive days, while the Pennsylvania farmers sold their produce to the British for gold. The next spring the regiment having been discharged, father and son and their friends, with no money, begged their way home by way of Hartford. Before the war he had been engaged in the "mercantile business" and shipbuilding. During the war the business went to pieces, and when he died in 1794 at the age of sixty-two, his estate was valued at only 178 Pounds for the movable goods.

To his wife, George left one third or Widow's Dower. After her death each of the seven girls was to get 30 Pounds. Sons George, Jr. and Nathan got the other house and sawmill and gristmill across the road, and the 100 acre farm at Hopkinton.

George Potter, Jr. [6] enlisted on Jan. 1, 1776 at the age of nineteen and fought with Gen. Sullivan's Life Guards at the Battle of Newport, which was held by the British. In an Order of the Day commending him for gallantry in action, young George was
promoted to Second Lieutenant. He then fought in the Battles of White Plains, Trenton and Princeton under Washington, and was at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777. After finding his way home with his father the next spring, he reenlisted in August. George, Jr. was wounded in the head at Newport again, discharged in September, and enlisted for the third time in July 1779. The next year, by then twenty-three, he married Mary Stillman, daughter of Benjamin Stillman [8].

After the war with the family shipping business gone, George, Jr. went to sea with Capt. Peleg Saunders. His was the first American vessel to go cod fishing in British waters off Canada. At Green Island the inhabitants would not let them land to dry their fish, but they were allowed ashore at Belle Isle. While there George saw the Duke of Clarence, later King William IV, aboard an English vessel. He used to relate that in a sudden shower he saw the Duke put on a waterproof mantle which he took from a box on deck.

When the family again started building ships at Potter Hill, George, Jr. took his own vessel to the West Indies to trade. On his last trip in 1801 he contracted yellow fever and died at home at the age of forty-five leaving nine children. The oldest was eighteen and the youngest two. The boys continued to run the store. George's wife was heard to say he never spoke a cross word to her. She was the only one in the neighborhood to wear pattens. On one trip he brought her a red silk umbrella for which the church elders reproved her, but which she continued to use. They were called the best looking couple around. After George died she took his place in church affairs, the only woman to do so.

Some time after George's death she married Asa Maxson and went with him to Petersburg, Rensselaer County, New York. Later they moved to Adams, Jefferson County near Sackett's Harbor. When Asa died in 1842, Mary went back to Hopkinton. One morning in her eighty-ninth year she went to the door and exclaimed "Oh what a beautiful day it would be if it should be my dying day." Within half an hour she died sitting in her chair.

The Potters' daughter Sarah married Philip Arnold Fenner [5], son of Stephen Fenner of Scituate.

SAUNDERS. Tobias Saunders [11] as a young man was a Life Guard under Charles I, which would indicate that his family had a good social position. His grandfather or great-grandfather was the Rev. Lawrence Saunders [13] who was educated at Eton and Cambridge and took clerical orders under King Edward VI. When Edward died in 1553 and his half-sister Mary Tudor came to the throne, she ordered all her subjects to attend Mass. Lawrence refused, was imprisoned, and almost four years later was burned at the stake; the same fate that befell his contemporary Thomas Hubbard [13]. When the fire was lit outside the gate of Coventry, he cried out "Welcome the cross, welcome the everlasting life."

The adventures of Tobias in settling Westerly with Robert Burdick have already been told. He was a Deputy for many years, and the Town Council of which he was Moderator met at his house.

It was the custom at the time for neighbors to borrow pork, and repay it when they
butchered. One man, who had already borrowed from Toby, came to ask for some more. He was told it was time he butchered his own hog. The man replied that he would have none left for himself if he repaid all he owed. Toby told him to go ahead and butcher, hang up the carcass, take it down early the next morning and say it was stolen. He proceeded to do so, but Toby took it down before the neighbor got to it, and salted it down in his own house. The story does not tell if the neighbors got any.

John Saunders [10], the oldest son, married Silence Belcher. They had eight children, three of them boys. When he died he did not leave much in the way of movable goods: a churn, spinning wheel, loom, two cows, three heifers, a calf, a pair of oxen, two swine, and eight lambs. His clothes and gun were valued at 15 Pounds. For his grandson Wait, he asked that the “executors lay out 5 Pounds in learning him to read and write.”

John Saunders, Jr. [9] married Read Pendleton, daughter of Caleb Pendleton [10]. Their daughter Mary married Benjamin Stillman [8].

PENDLETON. Major Bryan Pendleton [12] was living in Wells, Maine and left considerable property there; including, six silver spoons, two silver cups, table linen and books valued at 3 Pounds, which he left to his son James.

James Pendleton [11] was born in Maine. He had three children by his first wife and eight by his second, Hannah Goodenow. They came to Westerly from Portsmouth, New Hampshire before moving to Stonington in 1674. Besides a variety of livestock including thirty-nine sheep, he passed down the silverware from his father.

Caleb Pendleton [10] was born in Westerly in 1669. His wife is unknown, but they had ten children. He farmed and traded in his own vessel. When he died at seventy-seven his movable estate was valued at 147 Pounds, half again as much as his father’s. Wearing apparel including silver buckles and buttons came to 43 Pounds, a silver headed cane One Pound, steel traps 6 Pounds, his boat 33 Pounds and cash 28/10/0. His married daughters, including Read who married John Saunders, Jr., each got 10 Shillings.

MORE STILLMANS. We last saw Dr. George Stillman, Jr. [9] moving from Wethersfield to Westerly in 1705, where he married Deborah Crandall. They had five boys: George III, Elisha, Joseph, Benjamin and John; four of whom became grandparents, and married girls called Molly.

George III [8] continued the family calling and owned his own trading vessel. He married Molly Burdick, daughter of Benjamin Burdick [9]. Their son George IV [7] married a cousin Esther Stillman. He was a farmer and a colonel in the Militia at the time of the Revolution. Their daughter Susannah married Paul Maxson [6].

Joseph [8] married Molly Maxson, daughter of Joseph Maxson [9]. It was their daughter Esther who married George Stillman IV.

Benjamin [8] married Molly Saunders, daughter of John Saunders, Jr. [9]. Their daughter Mary married George Potter, Jr. [6] in 1780 when she was eighteen. Before her marriage she visited cousins in Brookfield, Madison County, New York. There she met a young man who remains anonymous. After her return home she

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received this letter which she treasured until the end of her days. It still exists, ragged and worn.

"February 2, 1779. Brookfield. Dear Mary. I gladly write a few lines under the consideration of our conversation as respects us with regard to our marriage. I think I can solemnly attest to the truth of this that my mind has not altered. I have yet the same desire for you to grant me your consent that I had when I saw you therefore I wish to inform you that it will be the greatest happiness and comfort to me if you will be so kind as to give me your consent in your letter for I think it will be a real advantage and a real addition to my comfort and happiness in this life, and if you can think that it will add anything to your happiness as much as mine and will give your consent it will be my greatest happiness to come and get you as soon as an opportunity presents. Therefore I must come to a close with my best love and affectionate care to you my love Mary Stillman. This from your loving friend [The name is inked over, but seems to be George Perkins.] When this you see remember me and have me in your mind let all the world say what they will speak of me as you find."

Mary saved a copy of her answer.

"Onred Sir. I take my pen to answer your letter and to let you know that I have considered seriously upon our conversation that evening. I have concluded that my affection was not strong a nute to give my hand in Marriage. It is a matter of great importance and requires a good deal of love on both sides to live happy together. I hope I always respected you as a worthy gentleman ever sense our first acquaintance. I don't think that I shall have any better offers then to except of yours but I don't think that I should be contented to lie in that country neither can I think that I could get the consents of my family. I think you can get a companion in that country that will make you more happy. I wish you well and hope that God may bless you with the comforts of this world and the world to come. I must bid you a long a Deu, hopen that the great distance and the long absense will some wean our affection. This is from your well wisher. Mary Stillman"

This was the Molly who in later life carried the red silk umbrella.

The fifth brother John [8] married Molly Clarke, daughter of Joseph Clarke IV [8], in 1745 when he was twenty-six. Three years later his father-in-law deeded him six acres of his farm north of town. It was later known as the Stillman's Homestead Farm. After the Seventh-Day people began moving out to New York State, John bought a town lot of fifty acres at Nelson, later called Erieville, in Madison County; and two other pieces in Berlin, Rensselaer County, where the Maxsons had settled. He also increased his acreage of the Homestead Farm, where he continued to live.

bought from his uncle Joseph Clarke IV ten acres for 510 Pounds in the depreciated State of Connecticut money. The Revolution still had two years to run. In 1786 he bought from Jesse Ross and Joseph Pendleton one acre with dwelling house on the Pawcatuck River for $230.00 silver. No one trusted the new United States bank notes either. In 1790 John inherited the Homestead Farm from his father. During the war he kept the Potter shipyard going. It was enough to have Mary's brother and father away in the war. The younger Potter boys ran the store.

In 1800 John bought seventy acres of land west and north of the Farm, running from near the Pawcatuck Bridge up the river to a point near Boom Bridge. Six years later he bought from a cousin, the widow Mary Davis, her dower rights in the property for $300.00. She and her children had moved across the river to Lower Pawcatuck, where the Davis family still owns the large farm. In 1808 their daughter Elizabeth Stillman married Silas Maxson [5].

In later years John moved to his place in Erieville, New York where his father had bought. By 1835 he was eighty-three years old and in failing health. He gave son-in-law Silas power of attorney to collect the notes made by Rowse Babcock, which amounted to $2,242.00 plus interest at 4%. That December he sent Silas $30.00 for the “use and comfort” of an indigent cousin, Maxson Lamphere. His brother-in-law Benjamin Potter contributed another $30.00. Greatly admired by all his family, John died the next year.

John’s inventory showed clothes and furnishings for $240.00, a silver watch $8.00, the family Bible $1.50. There were also 506 bushels of oats, a Note from Rowse Babcock now amounting to $4,600.00 and other Notes $3,400.00. Cash amounted to $146.64, ten shares of the Washington Bank $550.00 and ten shares Phenix Bank $400.00. The total came to $9,204.00. There is no record of Rowse paying up.

In the final accounting, expenses included: coffin and fixtures $8.00, three sets of marble gravestones by N. H. Brand $48.00, 5 yards black muslin and spool of thread $1.07 from T. W. & J. Potter, digging grave by James Daughty $1.25 and $1.50 for an auctioneer. Silas bought the town lot in Erieville for $150.00 and the two tracts in Berlin.

The Stillmans had built one of the first woolen mills in the area across the river from Westerly in Stillmanville. Practically all the people who worked there were members of the family. A story is told of one Stillman, a Tory in Newport during the Revolution. He remained loyal to England and refused to recognize the new United States. One of the precepts of the Seventh-Day Church being tolerance, he was left undisturbed by family and friends.

NEW YORK STATE

When the English took over New York from the Dutch in 1664, the old feudal patroon system established by the prosperous Dutch families outside of Manhattan was allowed to continue. The Van Rensselaers owned about 300,000 acres, including the whole of Rensselaer County. After the American Revolution Stephen Van Rensselaer, the “old patroon,” leased his land usually in 200 acre tracts for an annual fee and certain
services; and if a lessee sold his lease to another, he had to pay a transfer fee of 1/10 to 1/3 of the transfer price. Many of these people came from Rhode Island. It was not until 1838 that serious anti-lease agitation was started by the lessees, who by then were numerous enough to exert pressure on the Legislature.

When New York held its Constitutional Convention in 1846, the anti-lease party held the balance of power between the Whigs and the Democrats. Feudal tenure was abolished, and leases for agricultural land could not run for more than twelve years. The Maxsons, Stillmans, Burdicks and other members of the family, originally settling in Rensselaer County, had by that time spread out to other counties farther West. They were in Poland and Newport in Herkimer County; Edmeston in Otsego; Utica in Oneida; Brookfield, Leonardsville, Erieville and DeRuyter in Madison; New Berlin, Greene and Otselic in Chenango; Groton and McLean in Thompkins; Alfred and Little Genesee in Allegheny.

MAXSON. Paul Maxson [6] lived in the “Bungtown” section of Westerly near the river where he was a boat builder, and married Susannah Stillman, daughter of George Stillman IV about 1780. They had six boys: Silas, Jairus, Jesse, George Stillman, David and Paul, Jr. There were two daughters Susanna and Esther. In 1803 when he was forty-six, Paul moved with all his family except Silas out to Petersburgh, New York just over the mountains from the Connecticut-Massachusetts line, and took up a 200 acre farm from Van Rensselaer for twenty bushels of wheat a year. The next year they moved up the valley to Berlin where Paul’s brothers had settled, and rented a farm from a cousin Davis. Silas, just turned twenty-one, stayed behind in Westerly to work in the Greenman shipyard.

In June 1805 Paul, Jr. wrote back to his brother Silas:

“Farm fertile but corn pretty thin. Some was planted two or three times. Father has a chance to purchase the farm for $3,500.00. Mr. Davis wants $1,000.00 down, and would wait for the balance until it can be made from the farm. There is 350 acres of good land 1½ miles from the village. It wintered sixty head of neat stock and thirteen horses. There is two good dwellings and two good barns. If Father can get hold of this, you must lay aside the broad ax and join us.”

The land may have looked fertile compared to Westerly, but today it looks suitable only for grazing and apple growing.

Daughter Susanna became intimate with a young neighbor. In the summer of 1806 she wrote to big brother Silas:

“You write that you feel anxious to know of my courtship. Mr. [Alden] Burdick still honors me with the tokens of esteem, and things are carried so far I hope his esteem will never be no less than at present. I think you had best come up to yearly meeting [Seventh-Day] and see me, you know what I mean.”

Apparently she had not told her parents of the situation. Silas did not come up, but in
another letter dated Sept. 25 she wrote:

"I was married August 18 and all parties agreed I believe. We did not make much of a wedding, upward of thirty here. The next day every family in the village was invited to his uncle's. Mr. Burdick has been unwell but is getting better now."

Feb. 9, 1807 Father Paul, having bought up the lease for the farm, wrote:

"Paul Jr. has been to the [Hudson] river today and will go three more times this week. Oats 36¢ a bu. and corn 56¢ but only at the river. Hay $6. to $7. a ton, wheat 10/6, flax 14¢ a lb. We have raised about 500 bu. of grain. It will be necessary for me to hire money to pay Mr. Davis. He is right here to get it, but they don't hang for debt in this country thank fortune. With Due Respect and Parental Esteem. Paul and Susanna."

Silas visited his family the next winter when he was laid off at the shipyard. His father wrote in January 1808 after his return to Westerly:

"You mentioned a job you bargained for that was uncertain. You must expect to have disappointment as well as others. I repeat the advice you gave me 'Be contented for Godliness with contentment is great gain.' The situation at present is critical, but we raised aplenty for our family. Corn down to 50¢ and wheat 7/6. Brought in your fish and weighed them and they held out to ½ lb. Have not sold them yet Received $130. by Zebulon and very glad to see it. You said you might send more in the Spring but don't pinch yourself. Jairus is going to work home on the farm next year. I am not discouraged yet altho the Great Wheel is Stopt. I hop it will start agin and a good spoke turn in my favor. We are all well and eating apples by the cheerful fireside."

On October 3 Silas married Elizabeth Stillman, daughter of Uncle John Stillman, Jr.

Three years later revivals were sweeping the frontier country. Paul wrote:

"Dutiful Children. Your grandmother [Abigail Greenman, widow of David Maxson, living with her son Paul] has been bedridden two years last July. Glorious season with us in this country. The Power of God's Grace seems to be shed abroad in the hearts of the Children of Men in a Bountiful and Plentiful Manner in turning many from the Power of Sin and Saton to Serve the Living God, for there is daily flocking to Jesus. Our church had a four day meeting. I saw fifty-five baptized in thirty-two minits."

In September 1813 Paul wrote:

"Your Mother very feeble but sets up the most part of the time and knits. Great many die in this part of the country. Doctors ride night and day. [Paul, Jr. is by this time a doctor himself.] His 'prentice boy said he was making about $200. a month."

The War of 1812 had started, but was mostly at sea. The British were fighting
Napoleon too, but by April 1814 they had him safely tucked away on Elba, as they thought, and turned their attention to America. In August they burned Washington. Their troops poured into Canada. On September 12 Paul, Jr. wrote to Silas:

“All bustle and confusion here. Dispatches went through this place the 7th stating that the British had crossed over into this State in force with a heavy train of artillery and moving south with the avowed intention to destroy Plattsburg, since which reported to be done, but nothing official. Gen. Brown’s Army at Ft. Erie is stated to be in a perilous situation. God only knows the fate of our country, but every rational and reading man must see destruction. The whole Militia are called out en Masse, with orders to march to Plattsburg as soon as possible. They rendezvoused at Troy the 9th, and this morning, the 11th, 5,000 in full march for the northern frontier. Jairus, Jesse and George are gone and when to return no one knows. Farming all stopt, and Father with work for three good hands. 8 or 10 acres of corn stalks not cut and no plowing done this fall. All the banks in the State have stopt payment in specie. They opened before the troops marched to let each one change a bill for $1. All this harrassing and expense for nothing. The british will be gone and no mark of them seen this side of the line save what destruction they may make.”

The British had sailed down the Lake, but were challenged by MacDonough’s fleet at Plattsburg on September 11. There was slaughter on both sides, but MacDonough won the naval engagement. The British Army was forced to retreat after defeating the small American force stationed at Plattsburg. The three Maxson boys returned safely.

Even after the war officially ended, the British continued their blockade of the east coast and the West Indies. A severe depression followed. Paul, by then sixty-one, could not keep up the payments on the farm, which had been running for thirteen years. In March of 1818 he put up the farm for sale. The prospectus described it in detail, saying it was in Berlin about two miles east of Bentleys Bridge. Four months later he died, leaving the farm in equal shares to all five sons. Paul’s personal property included: old horse $15, six heifers $90, three cows $60, thirteen geese $3.25, plus house furnishings, clothes and farm implements.

To unmarried daughter Esther he left $200 in personal estate one year after his death. She had been keeping house after her mother died. To grandson Lee H. T. Maxson, Paul left $25.50 when he reached the age of twenty-one; the same for granddaughter Nancy Maxson when she reached eighteen, and to Sally Wilcox one dollar. Silas was named the sole executor. They sent home to him the pewter platters.

Dr. Paul Maxson, Jr. had died earlier that spring. He was only about thirty-four. His total estate amounted to $1,611.00, most of it in Notes for unpaid doctor’s bills. For the next eleven years, Jesse struggled to keep the farm going. Silas took a mortgage and sent them cash besides. In 1826 brother David died. Money was due on produce sold to cousins: the ones in Alfred owed $160.00, Jesse Saunders, a neighbor and cousin $80.00,
Stephen Coon another cousin $60.00.

The one bright spot for Jesse was his daughter's engagement. "Susan is to marry John Thomas in Troy. He is called a smart young man in the mercantile business." Part of the farm was sold to cousins Barton and Silas Whitford, but they could not make a go of it either. In 1829 Silas bought the whole thing for $1,550.00, subject to all the conditions in the original leases from Van Rensselaer. Jesse took what little was left after the mortgage and moved to Brookfield, Madison County, New York.

**ILLINOIS**

George Stillman Maxson, another of Paul's sons, went all the way to Illinois in the summer of 1837. In October he wrote to brother Silas and Betsy in Westerly:

"Ottawa, Lasel County. We arrived July 12 from New York State 950 miles thirty-two days on the road, with two wagons. We shipped our goods from Saketts Harbor to Chicago. There is 160 acres, half timber and half prairie, with 30 under cultivation. I paid $1,400.00 We are 1½ miles south of the Illinois River and the Canal, and ten miles from Ottawa the head of steam navigation, and five miles from Marcelas [Marseilles] on the Grand Rapids of the Illinois. They are building the Canal connecting Lake Michigan and the Mississippi, which is expected to be finished in 4 or 5 years. It is 60 ft. wide at the bottom with 6 ft. of water and 100 miles in length. Half of the land ten miles in width lying each side was granted by Congress to build it. Land is being sold 10% down with nine yearly payments at 6% interest.

It is first rate grain and stock country, Pork $5. to $6. a 100 Wt. Beef ditto Wheat $1. a bu. Corn 50¢ Potatoes 31¢ Best you ever saw. Cows $20. to $30. Labor is high $2.25 [a ten hour day]. Cheese 18¢ to 25¢ Butter 31¢. Best chance for dairying I ever saw. All the feed you want in Summer and all the Hay in Winter for cutting. Put up one ton per acre on prairie and 2 or 3 on River Bottoms. Plenty of Deers, Prairie Wolf, Gees and Turkeys. Prairie Hens weigh 2 lbs. dressed, and can see 50 to 100 setting on stakes and fences. Lots of Wild Gees on the wheat field, Paul shot one for the quill I am writing with.

If your boys had a drop of Uncle John Stillman Blood in them, it would set them on tiptoes. Dear Brother, I am about to ask a favor of you. I have a mind to go into the Dairying Business in the Spring. Must have $400. - $500. Money worth 10% here. If you can lone me the money for two or three years you will do me a favor as I have paid all I could for land. I can go south 150 miles [to Stonington in Christian County] in the Spring and buy Cows and Calves for $12. or $14. and more than double my money in one year. I have a Permit from the
State for 650 acres of Canal Land. I think it is safe doing business by Mail. My brother-in-law has a store here and does all his business to York and Troy by Mail. [Sons] George Jr. and Paul have a little ague and fever caught on the road going through Indiana, which was very wet and marshy. I hear you can ship from Stonington Point all the distance to Ottawa in 15 days.”

Silas never answered. He had enough to take care of with his family back East.

Seven years later in 1845 George wrote to Silas’ son William Ellery. All their children were still at home in Illinois—George, Jr., Paul, Asa, Julia, David and Roxey. The two older boys had their own adjoining farms. George’s brother Jairus and his son Silas Franklin arrived that October. They were growing quantities of wheat, corn, potatoes, and peaches; four years from the pits. He had 160 apple trees, all grafted, A year later he wrote again to Ellery:

“Most of my prairie broken 8 or 9 years. Wheat best crop for sod. I alternate with corn. After planting we lay out our rows 4 ft. wide 100 rods long. 1 ½ bu. of ears make one bu. shelled corn. We use a cultivator and shovel plow each way twice. We plow all Summer and not hit a stone. We can work very close to the Corn in August. We take a horse and one bu. of wheat in a bag and ride through the Corn and sow 1 ½ bu. per acre, and go twice with a cultivator in a row. A man will git in about 4 acres a day. Let the corn stalks stand until Spring and then cut them down. We git a crop of Corn and a crop of Wheat with one plowing. The Canal will be finished next summer. It will help our market and reduce lumber to nearly Chicago prices. Pine lumber at Chicago $15. to $24.50 per M.

Ottawa is a busy place, 12 fancy dry goods stores, 2 apothecaries, six public places. They have machines for cutting grain, some kinds drawn by 22 horses. [This was in 1846.] Two men will cut and lay reddy for binding from $15. to $20. per day, and threshing machines of six horse power that will thresh and clean fit for market, from 100 to 300 bu. per day.”

SILAS MAXSON IN WESTERLY

We last left Silas a young man of twenty-one staying behind in Westerly in 1803, after his family left for New York State. He had gone to the Little Red Schoolhouse on Cookie Hill, and was living with his cousins the Silas Greenmans and worked in their shipyard. He was twenty-six when he married Elizabeth Stillman (Fig. 3), daughter of Uncle John Stillman, Jr. Their only daughter Eliza was born the next year in 1809. She never married, but spent her life visiting the many relatives in New York State, being the cheerful, helpful aunt. She spent her last days in her own third floor apartment with her
younger brother Ellery at Old Field, West Mystic.

William Ellery Maxson [4] was born nine years after Eliza in 1818. A family story says that William Ellery, signer of the Declaration of Independence for Rhode Island, was visiting Westerly that summer from his home in Newport, and used to sit on a balk of timber at the Greenman shipyard watching the young men at work. He used to chat with Silas; hence the name for his first boy.

The only other child was Cyrus, born in 1821. He was destined for the shipbuilding trade, but was never one to stay long at anything. When he was twenty-one, he was drafted into the Militia to quell Dorr’s Rebellion in Providence. Older brother Ellery went along to keep his eye on Cyrus.

**Dorr’s Rebellion.** Thomas W. Door was a young lawyer in Providence in the late 1830’s who took up the cause of better representation for the larger towns which had become cities, and for a Judiciary independent of the Legislature. Like the “rotten borough” system in England, each town of whatever size had two Representatives in the State Legislature. In 1841 Dorr called an unauthorized Convention with delegates from towns according to population. The Freeman’s Constitution was adopted by a large majority, and Dorr was elected Governor. Neither the State Supreme Court, nor President Tyler would recognize him. Dorr and his “army” attacked the Arsenal at Providence, but were repulsed. While they were encamped in the woods outside of Providence, they were attacked by the Militia, and Cyrus brought home as a souvenir a piece of leather marked
June 30, 1842. That same year the regular Legislature amended and adopted the Freeman’s Constitution; giving voting rights to non-freeholders, who since the days of John Clarke 200 years before had become a large majority of the population. In 1844 Dorr was convicted of high treason and imprisoned. The next year the Legislature released him, and in 1851 restored his citizenship. It was not until 1860 that the Judiciary was made independent of the Legislature, and 1888 that full rights were given to naturalized citizens.

**GOLD IN CALIFORNIA.** After Dorr was imprisoned, Cyrus returned to Westerly, but not to stay. The discovery of gold in California started many young New Englanders to the West Coast. A letter dated April 28, 1852 describes the start of his next adventure:

*Ship Daniel Webster Latitude 14°-56’ at 12 o’clock [which would place him south of Haiti]  “Dear Sister Eliza and Parents. Came on board the 20th and stowed our baggage in our birth first thing. One continual babble at the gangway. At 3 precisely they drew off the gangladder and moved a few yards from the dock. Hundreds to see us off. Left at 3½. Through carelessness the Pilot of the Ship ran fould of a Brig which broke our fore main topsail yards, also stove out Starboard boat forward, but we made no stop. They fired a cannon on board the Ship and away we went amid cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. The Steamer Eldorado left at 3. We passed the Hook about 5½, wind blew quite a gale. John was seasick soon after. I felt rather out about 9. Went down to my berth and in less than 3 minutes I had to get up and throw out Jonah, which I did with a hearty good will. Had to raise Jonah again in the morning. I slept in the steerage the first two nights, but since I have taken my blankets and lay on deck. Four days out smooth as a pond. In the evening we have music on deck vocal and instrumental and talk without ceasing till late at night. Our fare is good, coffee, sugar, hard bread, meat and some kind of soup today, rice with molasses. And for supper tea, sugar, butter and bread etc. Tables hung with ropes. One time a sea struck and away went the dishes. Some of the men against the bulwarks with tea and meat on top of them. Have seen San Domingo, Cuba and Jamaica and other islands. 6th day out saw a steamship. Expect to reach San Juan tomorrow night. 324 passengers on board. Quite a number of lady passengers. They sell apples on board 5¢ a piece, Lemons 12½¢ and other things. Bar on board where they have all kinds of liquor, but it does not affect me only with disgust. Gambling too. Noon today sun over our heads and could not see our shadow. John and I well and hearty, also Mr. Patterson and Mr. Barber. Write to Nevada City, California. I think I can get it from there.”*

Nevada City is south of the Yuba River which flows into the Sacramento.

In a year’s time Cyrus was home with neither fame nor fortune, and married to
Charlotte Coon. Four years later he died.

_SILAS, FATHER OF THE FAMILY._ In 1826 _Silas_ had sent little _Ellery_ aged eight and Cyrus aged five to Mary Ann Hardeen’s school in Westerly for a few summer weeks. Her bill shows three weeks schooling for _Ellery_ and six weeks for Cyrus at 5¢ a week. For the rest of his life _Silas_ like his father-in-law was always taking care of various members of the family. In 1829 _Silas_ paid a bill for cousin Simeon Lamphere (Lamphere) from the White Rock Mfg. Co. for tea, rum, codfish, etc. as well as other debts; including, a note for $235.00 to Thomas and Joseph Potter, who ran the store at Potter Hill, a note to Silas Greenman for $27.06 and one to Isaac Champlin for $86.52.

April 30, 1830 he got a letter from cousin Braddock Hall in Berlin, New York. Hall was pretty much of a windbag, but he kept this one short.

“There is considerable stur in this place about religion. Great numbers have joined the First Day and Seventh Day Churches, 400 members in Petersburgh and 200 in Berlin. Also many great numbers in the Unitarian and Methodist, which makes happy times. I joined the Temperance Society. Have drunk no spot of anything in one year. My health is much better. I need $700. to buy some property. I want you to talk with [my] Father and see if he can help me. I wrote but have had no answer from him.”

_Silas_ had bought his brother Jesse’s property there the year before, and put Hall in charge of it. It stood empty for a couple of years, as many were moving farther west in the state. Hall leased it to the Whitford brothers, as told before, but they could not make a go of it. On Sept. 19, 1832 Hall wrote: “Through the Goodness of a Kind and Merciful God my family at present enjoying a tolerable state of health. I am not without trouble in this World. I hope we may spend one never ending Eternity in Bliss and Happiness together. There is six new dwellings in this Valley this summer. Twenty-two deaths since last January.” The next February he wrote again:

“Dear Brother Silas. It is a low time for religion in this place. [The revival did not last long.] Tell Brother Lamphear he must abstain from all kinds of spirits. Your houses is all empty. None of the Hollow farms does as they expect. Have hired out your farm to Daniel Lewis who owns the farm next to yours. He is to put a half ton of plaster and seed with grass, carry out all the manure and put it where needed. It will be stocked chiefly with sheeps. I told him I should See Close to him the whole while.”

There is a letter from Clark Wilcox, a cousin in Groton, Tompkins County, New York: “We have buried two of our children, ten and two. Wife Sally’s weight down from 180 to 90. There is a great revival of religion in this place.”

In August 1834 Braddock Hall writes again.

“Samuel Green at point of death. If I never should see you in this World I hope that we shall meet on the Blessed Shore of Eternal Bliss and Happiness. Corn good generally speaking. A heavy snow on May 15 and
froze hard and hurt the apples. I had the honor of speaking to the Vice
President of the United States when he passed through this town.
Politics runs high in this State. There will be warm elections."

He refers to John C. Calhoun, who shortly resigned and was elected to the Senate. A
strong States' Rights man, he was probably campaigning for congressional candidates.

Uncle John Stillman, Jr. died in 1836, and son-in-law Silas was named Executor.
Hall writes, "it is proper that you be Administrator. I have turned farmer, better than
black-smithing." That same year Simeon Lamphere died, and Silas again paid his debts.
Since no one else wanted the responsibility, Silas was appointed Guardian for Simeon's
two minor girls, Mariah and Fanny.

In the fall Silas bought up Uncle John's farm in Westerly from the other heirs:
Braddock Hall, Clark and Luann Saunders, and Simeon's son Maxson. That same year he
subscribed $25 to DeRuyter Institute, Perry Burdick, President; which various family
members in York State attended. The year before he gave $15 for repairs to the Seventh-
Day Meetinghouse in Hopkinton; and after the job was done, made up the balance of
$48.07. By 1840 he had bought up the rest of Uncle John's property from the Lamphear
girls, which included the 50 acre tract in Erieville and the lots in Berlin.

In 1842 at the age of sixty, Silas started a new house for himself in Westerly.
Weadon Clark charged $1.20 a ten hour day for the masonry work. The foundation, cut
stone steps and chimney came to $129.69. By 1853 Silas was in failing health and
appointed son Ellery to sell the farm in Berlin. Albert G. Hall, Braddock's son, bought it
for $1,240.00. Ellery's charges were: passage out and back home $6.50, 8 days lost time
$16.00, deed and "other troubles" $1.00. Silas died that spring at the age of seventy-one.

WISCONSIN TERRITORY

PHILIP ARNOLD FENNER. Philip A. Fenner [5] was born on his father's farm at
Scituate, Rhode Island in 1792. At an early age he went to Providence to learn the
machinist trade from an uncle Amasa Sprague who had started a cotton mill there. The
Spragues later built a large mill at Sprague, Connecticut. A few years later Philip went
down to Potter Hill where a cousin Joseph Potter was building a cotton mill on the site of
the family gristmill. When some of the Stillman cousins started their own textile mill at
Stillmanville across the river from Westerly, Philip designed and built for them cloth
shearing machinery.

In 1817 while working at Potter Hill, he married Sarah (Sally) Potter, daughter of
George Potter, Jr. [6]. She had been living in New York State with her mother, who had
since married Asa Maxson. Sally was home at Potter Hill on a visit. The Fenner's first
child John was born the same year, and daughter Mary two years later.

About 1820 Philip went out to Herkimer County, New York to help settle his
brother Isaac's family, and picked out a site for himself at Poland on the West Canada
River north of Utica. Later that year Philip moved out with his family and set up a cotton
mill, designing and building his own machinery. Cotton by then was being shipped up to the many water powered mills all through New England and New York State. Hiram was born in 1822, Sarah Maria in 1825, Charles Arnold in 1826, Emily in 1828, Susan in 1830 and Lydia Ann in 1832.

Philip was appointed Postmaster and Justice of the Peace in the new village; positions he held from 1825 to 1843. He began experimenting with a rubber coating for his cotton goods, but it was sticky in hot weather and brittle in cold. It was not until 1839 that Charles Goodyear, back in Connecticut, accidently discovered vulcanizing when he spilled some of his rubber mix on a hot stove. Before then, however, the Panic of 1837 had struck, followed by years of depression. Philip tried to stick it out, but finally gave up early in 1843. He sold off his property, including the mill which is now the site of a lumber mill, and decided to follow Elder William Stillman and others of the family to Wisconsin Territory.

Philip and the boys built a large four seated wagon to carry the family West. Early in the spring Philip and John left to look over the new country. John stopped off to work in a hotel in Milwaukee and never did join the family. In a letter from Milwaukee dated Aug. 7, 1843 Philip sent home a glowing report, much as George S. Maxson had done from Illinois in 1837. The first part of the letter dated July 1 says he first stayed with some Burdick cousins at Finch Settlement south of Fort Madison across the Rock River. Later in July he was in Whitewater, Walworth County where he got a job building a “flower” mill. It had an eighteen foot overshot wheel, the shaft 20 inches in diameter and eighteen feet long.

“I do not get but ¼ of my pay here until April unless I take wheet that I can have any time after harvest. I do not know how long the family will want me, but I think until the mill is finished which will take about two months. I shall be glad to be building a house for ourselves, but as long as I can be earning an acre of land a day ($1.25) I think I had best improve the opportunity. I can go under Stillman’s roof until we can build. I propose for John to go East for you. You say you are preparing to come on by land. If you start, steer to Erie, Cleveland and Chicago, then to Big Foot Prairie then to Dulack Prairie [as Milton was first called].”

What Philip did not know when he mailed the letter was that his family had already left Poland in their four seated wagon. When I was a child there were heated family arguments over whether the Fenners went West in a “covered wagon” or a wagon with a cover on it. The term “covered wagon” always applied to a Conestoga wagon, which had a body like a scow and a canvas cover on bow frames. My own feeling is that they had a “Hoosier wagon” which was square bodied with walls on the sides and back about 4½ feet high with a high canvas top.

On June 30 Sally and her children took off. The oldest girl Mary was twenty-four, Maria was eighteen, Hiram twenty-one and Charlie seventeen. The three other girls were still younger. They were two months on the road. Their Mitchell’s Travelers Guide map,
published in Philadelphia in 1833, is still well preserved. Each night the women slept in rough taverns, erected to take care of emigrants like themselves. The boys slept on the ground or in the wagon. They walked most of the way along with Hiram’s large Newfoundland dog “Ring.” When “Ring” got footsore he had to be tied in the wagon to make him stay there. The boys were sick part of the time especially through Indiana; as their Maxson cousins were six years before.

Shortly before they left Poland, New York, Sally was baptized in the West Canada River by Elder Hiram Whitcher of the Freewill Baptist Church. She took a letter to join any Evangelical Church she found, but did not use it. In Whitewater she attended the Methodist and Episcopal churches, and the Congregational where she took communion. Philip never joined a church. The Seventh-Day people did not join the church as children.

Their arrival at Finch Settlement early in September caught Philip by surprise. They slept in the wagon, and presumably in a tent. Hiram, sick with ague and fever, died three weeks after they got there. The next spring when news of his death reached Poland, Elder D. D. McKoon wrote them a letter of condolence.

“Dear Friends. I thank the Lord that I this morning have my reason, as I have been deprived of it much of the time in my sickness—twenty-three days in the house in the west end of the store. Let me ask, have you all sought the Lord? Do you all live religion? Times is good in our church. Nearly the whole place has become Abolitionist. Sister Fenner allow me to entreat you to be faithful in the discharge of every duty. I hope the young children will give their hearts to God and become Christians. And suffer me, Mr. Fenner, to express my anxiety that you may become a disciple of Jesus Christ. God has come near you by taking away a lovely son.”

WHITESTONE. Samuel Prince built the first house in Whitewater in 1837. It was of logs, twelve feet square, with a roof of poles sheathed with four foot shakes of white or yellow pine. When the town was organized in 1840, the local residents built their own schoolhouse of logs and hired Sheldon Powers as Schoolmaster. Isaac Ulysses Wheeler, called “Squire”, and his two sons set up a blacksmith shop. They cast steel plows which sold for $12.00. That winter a New Year’s Eve Ball was held in the schoolhouse. One young man was seen to kiss his girl right on the dance floor. He was forcibly ejected and brought suit, but lost the case. That set the tone of the village. Liquor was sold, but only with Dr. Clarke’s prescription.

By the fall of 1841 a sawmill was in operation, and the next year the Exchange Hotel was built of sawn lumber. It was a temperance house. Before that year was out there was another hotel, the Whitewater. Liquor was not mentioned. The next New Year’s Eve Ball was held there, and lasted from 7:00 P.M. until dawn. By the end of 1843 there were 184 families within a six mile radius, many with Yankee names; including, Billings, Clarke, Stillman, Wheeler and Woodbury.

Late that fall Philip had moved in from Finch Settlement and bought a house in
town. It was a good thing he did for it was known long after as the "hard winter." Young Hanford Conger had run a school on the second floor of the house. He had moved on, so Maria reopened the school. She wrote back to the Potter cousins in Westerly:

"Rollin Head, a complete stranger, wrote our posters and ads and helped settle our terms of tuition. [He afterward became United States Senator from Wisconsin.] I had between 30 and 40 scholars before the first term was over. I had three Wheeler children including three year old Mary Ann. They were willing to pay her tuition, so I just taught her what I thought best. I found her one day crying on the outside stairs, so I took her in my arms and carried her home."

Although there was already a wagon shop in town run by O. A. Weed, Philip set up his own. He sold one to Deacon Stillman and one to the Walker brothers at Milton. Mary then twenty-six was working on the Magoon farm outside of town. That fall she became engaged to young Dr. Oliver C. Magoon, but died before the wedding. That spring the other girls went almost daily to the cemetery. Hiram's dog "Ring" was trained to carry flowers in his mouth to his master's grave. The prairie was covered with flowers, but the cemetery was a bleak spot with graves scattered here and there without headstones. After Mary died Philip carved headboards out of oak plank, cut the names in and painted the letters black. Forty years later they were still there, but are now long since gone.

Maria later wrote her impressions of the village.

"The first store was built of logs. I never used to go in although it was nearest our house. It may have been a sort of wholesale trading house. They were mostly men who went there and plenty of them. I used to see Indians go there whenever they came into the place. I think the owner could talk to them fluently, while the merchants could not. He bought our big four-seated wagon for $75. and paid cash for it. The liquor store was kept by Mr. O'Connor. He appropriated too much for his own use. He did not stay long but moved to a new place called Waterloo down on the Catfish. The people there were temperance people. The next thing we heard the place was nicknamed 'Whiskeyloo.'"

That Fall mother Sally swallowed her pride and wrote to her brother-in-law Joseph Spicer in Hopkinton saying they needed some money. The girls had been making and selling bonnets, and helping in the school, but the sickness in the family took most of it. That winter Spicer sent them $100.

Maria wrote more about village life.

"There was a large family named Woodbury lived near the mill pond. One morning when I stepped out on the stairs to ring the bell for school, I saw their house burning. They had a carpenter shop in the basement. The house burned down with little Genie in it. Before night the good people of Whitewater had subscribed money enough to build them a new house. For my contribution I gave free tuition for a term,
which wasn’t much. Just after they moved into the new house there was a prayer meeting there. Their brother-in-law and wife from over the pond kissed their two children good bye and started for the meeting, walking across the ice. It was growing dark, and as they neared the shore they walked off the ice into the water. The man came out and the woman went under. The poor little children cried for days for their mother to come home. Not very many days passed before their mother’s sister came to care for them, and she and their father were married the same day.”

HEBRON. A few miles north of Whitewater there was a place called Bark Woods on the Bark River where Levi Powers had a sawmill. In the spring of 1845 he and Philip each built a log house there. Both families moved up the same day. Being Old Testament Evangelicals they named the place Hebron. The Indian trail from Milwaukee to Fort Madison went right near the houses. Soon after some friends came up from Whitewater to call and the Fenners invited them to go fishing in their boat which was tied up below the dam. It is now a winding little stream overhung with great trees. Eighteen year old Charlie had a small skiff up on the pond. Maria wrote

“Just as we were getting into our boat we saw Charlie just above the dam and so near the fall that he could not possibly turn back. We were frightened dumb and could only watch for what seemed certain death to him. As he neared the fall we saw him get himself into the very hind end of the skiff and he came shooting over the sheet of water like a bird and landed safe and sound beyond the tumult of water and rocks beneath. His going over was purely accidental but he dragged his boat back again and tried two or three times more with the same result, a feat he had now learned to perfection.”

Having lived on a mill pond myself as a boy, I am sure that Charlie had done this trick many times before.

By July Philip found time to write his brother-in-law Spicer.

“Dear Sir. Yours rec’d. Contents very acceptable but an idea of Sally’s without my knowledge. Money soon applied to the purchase of 40 acres of land, 2/3 timber and 1/3 natural meadow. Present value to us making shoogar. Best shoogar bush I know. Last spring 700 lbs. shugar and 15 gals. molasses. Not much done yet building up a village, turning mill in state of progress, blacksmith shop, brick kiln, Saleratus works. Grist mill in a few years. All land bought nigh here, neighbors thick. In all our misfortunes, find no fault with the country. Have one acre on corner of two roads.

The lot is now the site of a pleasant house surrounded by large trees. Hebron is still a little village.

Sally added her own message.
"You wrote Mother wanted to know if we had the privilege of keeping the Sabbath. I have the privilege, but have to keep it alone. Have first rate neighbors, generally from New York, Vermont, Massachusetts and Maine. Some from Providence. When we first came to Finch [west of Rock River beyond Indian ford], all strangers except the Burdicks. The neighbors had no interest in our welfare because we had no money. Now we have good friends and kind neighbors. We live in a little frame house about as big as your back kitchen. There is a little white cat aclimbing on my back aplagin me. We have two cows, two calves, 8 pigs, 47 hens and chickens, four turkeys, two dogs and one young deer Charlie found about two months ago. We have three swarms of bees. A neighbor gathered enough honey in the woods last Fall he sold for $60. Another said this is the best country for poor folks I know anywhere in the world. Fruit we miss very much, but we have 20 peach trees and 10 grapes agrowing."

*Maria* started a school about 1½ miles away, paid for by the school district. One of her favorite scholars was an Indian boy named "Turkovaness." Since then we have often had a dog in the family called "Turk" in his memory. When the sawmill was finished they built a frame house. Charlie found a baby deer in the woods and brought it home, where it became a member of the household. One day in the new little church they heard the sound of pattering feet coming down the aisle. It was the deer, which stopped at their seat. *Philip* had to lead her out and take her home. She finally had to be disposed of as she got to striking people with her feet.

After the Black Hawk War in 1832 the Pottawottamie Indians were moved out of the area to a reservation in the southwest part of the territory, but they kept the right to come back to their hunting grounds in the Whitewater area. *Maria* described the tribe coming in for their summer encampment.

"One day we looked out and saw a procession of squaws walking one after another as we call Indian file for they never seemed to walk any other way. These squaws were loaded with baggage and packs of material for starting their camp and also carrying pappooses on their backs and some of them carried two. They looked more like pack horses than they did human beings. The next day another procession made its appearance which was very different from the first. They were forty brave Indians, each one riding an Indian pony and only carrying their guns with them, and they looked very dignified and were fantastically dressed in Indian costume. The forty ponies were all turned into the woods to go where they pleased. They all seemed trained to stay near the camp and would come by a peculiar call by the Indians.

The squaws were too neighborly and less dignified. They would come into the house without any ceremony and set their pappooses up
against the wall, strapped on boards, for us to admire. The Indian braves were too proud to beg, but the squaws would beg or take anything they could. When they went away they picked vegetables in the garden and put them in their blanket on their back.

One day we visited their camp and went to see the largest and best looking wigwam which proved to be the chief's. His Royal Highness invited us to come in and treated us very politely in his Indian way. He invited us to take seats on the ground and entertained us by showing us decorations, instruments of warfare and cooking utensils which were hung on the sides of the wigwam. He showed us his pass from Gov. James Doty saying that they were peaceable and friendly and requesting people to let them hunt and fish in the vicinity, and not give them or sell them liquor. When we were about to leave, the chief invited us to stay and see his pappooses. We supposing they were little pappooses and being fond of children, waited. They soon came and were three tall Indians, as large as their father. One dressed up for the occasion in a shirt which he wore outside of his what stood for pants. They threw down their game outside and came into the wigwam. The squaws hastened out with big knives to dress the game. At another time, the chief said I would be a good squaw for his pappoose Pocagon. He seemed to think it was an honor, and I suppose it was as great an honor as he could bestow. The chief had a bitter hatred of fire water. He said 'Not until the dove shall cease to fear the hawk that steals her young will he cease to sound the war whoop of alarm against the destroyer of their children and loved ones.’

1846 began a good year for Philip. He was appointed Postmaster and Justice of the Peace at Hebron, and Indian Commissioner for the district for which he was well fitted, and would give him an adequate income. That summer malaria struck the area. Hardly a family escaped and many died, especially the Norwegians who were coming into Whitewater and living three or four families in a small house. In September Philip himself died of the disease. Both he and Sally were fifty-four, Maria was twenty-one, Charlie twenty, Emily eighteen, Susan sixteen and Lydia fourteen.

With no income Sally returned three years later to her old home at Potter Hill. Afterward when the furniture was sold to Deacon Stillman it just about paid the cost of storage. They took a steamer from Milwaukee through the Great Lakes to Buffalo, and from there a packet boat on the Erie Canal. A steamer carried them down the Hudson and Long Island Sound and so to the home Sally had left thirty years before. Warm and safe she lived there until her death sixteen years later.

John came home from Milwaukee in 1848 to die when he was only thirty-one. The others married Seventh-Day Baptists from Westerly. Charlie married Ann Elizabeth Babcock. Their son George P. was president for years of the Unitarian-Universalist Church in New London, and of the Babcock Printing Press Company. Emily married Daniel
OLD FIELD, WEST MYSTIC

WILLIAM ELLERY MAXSON. Ellery Maxson [4] was born in Westerly in 1818, the son of Silas and Elizabeth Stillman Maxson. When he was sixteen he went to work for his cousins George, Clark and Thomas Greenman, who had set up a shipyard at Old Mystic to be nearer the source of oak timber. When they moved their operation down to Greenmanville in 1838, Ellery moved there too.

In 1839 when he was twenty-one, he married Elizabeth M. Smith of Westerly. Son Herbert was born in 1842. John was born in 1844 but died before he was two. Ellery’s wife Elizabeth lived at home while he boarded during the week in Greenmanville. In November 1845 he wrote to his father “Respected Father. I am sending you $59.00 for you to keep or use in deposit. Let my wife have from time to time what she may find necessary as I do not want her to go much on credit. I have reserved $25.00 to $30.00 for my own use, which I think will do with my wages.”

Son Arthur was born in 1847 and his mother Elizabeth died a year later. On March 4, 1849 Ellery married Sarah Maria Fenner who had come with her mother back to Potter Hill from Wisconsin in 1845. She was now twenty-four. She told afterward that she was married the same day that Zachery Taylor was inaugurated President. They set up housekeeping in Hopkinton until he could get a place in Greenmanville. Two girls were born in 1850 and 1852, but died as babies.

The short-lived days of the clipper ships was at hand. By 1850 plans were afoot by some of the monied men in Mystic to set up another shipyard. There were eight of them: Capt. Nathan Gallup and his son Simeon, Capt. William G. Fish, Judge Asa Fish, Capt. William Clift, Isaac Clift, William H. Barber and Benjamin F. Hoxie. Ellery was getting a reputation as a first rate ship designer as well as a good yard foreman. In February he wrote his father:

“I learned the evening you left that Asa Fish was going to let me have half of his 1/8 if I wanted it, as his intention was in the first place to put in $1,000.00. I saw Mr. Fish and concluded to take the 1/16. He said he should like to have part of the money before long if convenient. I paid him $100.00 and I should like you to get the amount of my two notes, and $200.00 or $300.00 beside if you will let me have it, and take my note and I will manage the rest the best way I can. You might take the money out of the bank, if you think best, until spring, and then urge the Larkin boys to pay on the bank note. We are all as well as common. Your Dutiful Son.”

On January 5, 1853 the six remaining partners, for Isaac Clift and William Fish had sold out to the others, bought the Joseph Packer Field on the river at West Mystic, afterwards known as Old Field. The price was $2,148.97. Ellery's name was given first in
the deed. He was then thirty-five. He started building his own house, and a boarding house for the work crews. Father Silas died in May. A brig was launched that October and a schooner the next August. They were already building a full rigged ship the B. F. Hoxie which was launched in November. The principal owner was N. G. Fish & Company, with the partners and others in town owning shares. Over the next six years other ships and brigs were built, which are well covered in books and articles about the yard.

Emily Fenner Maxson [3] was born in the new house in 1855, followed by Silas II in 1857. After the death of another daughter, Charles Potter Maxson was born in 1862. Ellery kept a diary from 1857 to 1868. Except for a few flashes of indignation at the conduct of the War, it is concerned mostly with shipyard work and the weather. On January 10, 1861 he wrote “News just received of the firing on the Star of the West by the Secessionists.” The week before he had talked with Capt. Nathan G. Fish about buying out the other partners, who apparently felt that with the threat of war the business would be a poor investment. Their offers were quickly accepted, and on January 28 the firm of Maxson, Fish & Company was formed. Ellery was to manage the yard and Fish handle the finances.

The rest of the diary entry for that day is typical. “Signed petition to get a lighthouse at Noank. Looked for timber at Candlewood Hill [Groton], Stonington and Slocumville [Rhode Island]. Ordered 50 tons of oak at Candlewood Hill at $7.50 per ton delivered at Mystic. Timber at Chapman’s for $6.00. The Secessionists continue to steal forts, arsenals, mints and revenue vessels.”

On April 12 Fort Sumter was fired on. Two days later President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers. On the 18th a rally was held at Fort Rachel at Mystic with speeches and flag raising. On the 22nd nineteen year old Herbert and two other Mystic boys enlisted for a three month term. Between $4,000 and $5,000 was pledged by local people to support the Connecticut volunteers. A week later a local company was formed with Whitman Packer elected Captain, Mr. Daboll 1st Lieutenant and Jedediah Randall 2nd Lieutenant. The boys took the train to New Haven and Ellery went down to see them on May 6. “Oh, the dreadful necessity of war in a holy and just cause.” By June 1 the Connecticut men were being drilled by West Point cadets in Washington. By July 22 some of them were dead at the first Battle of Bull Run. Herbert came home right after at the end of his enlistment.

On June 24 Ellery notes that they received a contract from Washington to build the hull of a gunboat for $53,900.00, beating out Mallory on the bid. On August 19 Mr. Bushnell called with plans for a bomb proof war steamer. It was to be the first completed “ironclad,” 700 tons and 180 feet long with a stout wood hull sheathed with plate and the light railroad rails of the time. Unlike the Monitor, built about the same time, it could elevate its guns. The total contract price came to $235,250.00, and late that fall construction on the Galena began. By January 1 they had built a shed over the hull so that the weather would not hold up work. Two weeks later Mr. Patterson had 98 men at work on the armor. It was launched on February 14. The vessel took a pounding at the Battle of Hampton Roads. Later it was stripped of its armor, was at Mobile Bay with
Admiral Farragut, and ended its life as a coastal brig.

On May 1, 1862 word came through of the capture of New Orleans. Like many others with the same thought, Ellery noted “The Rebel cause looks as though they were on their last legs.” The war lasted three more years. By July 21 he wrote “The prospect of the war is disastrous for want of men of decision.” On August 5 the President called for 300,000 men for nine months. A month later Herbert signed up again with seven other Mystic boys. By December they were at a captured Confederate fort of 40 or 50 guns, Fort Parapet, eight miles above New Orleans. Ellery complained that workmen were going to New York for higher pay, $2 to $4 a day.

Business at the yard continued to boom, but on March 1, 1863 Ellery noted:

“Everything is going up to fabulous prices. Duck for sails was up to $1. a yard. Rigging, iron paint and everything follow gold, which has got up to 174 cents. It is all the work of the Enemies of the Country and I wish that they was obliged to pull hemp or look through the grates. Thirty deserters in the Army of the Potomac are sentenced to be shot, but I hope they will commence on Traitor Officers first and make a clean thing of it. General Banks seems to have more care for Louisiana Planters than for the Government. He is growing unpopular fast in New England. We are tired out with Generals that love Traitors and try to preserve them their slaves.”

In February 1863 the Mystic men were in a bloody fight at Port Hudson on the Mississippi. Jed Randall, the new Company Commander, was killed, but again Herbert was unhurt. Ellery kept him posted on the work at the yard. On March 11 Herbert wrote home:

“I see that you are driving business pretty hard. What do the Greenmans have to say about so much being done at Old Field? You know they have always turned up their noses at anything you attempted to do, but I guess they begin to think they are not all the smart ones in the world. You say they have put up a saw mill in their yard. Know how theirs works and if you put one up improve on it all you can. Rudd must have some pretty good cider if you have to call on him in the midst of a severe snowstorm.”

Cider, no matter how strong, was not a distilled spirit. Ellery voted the Prohibition ticket for forty years.

On July 8 Ellery wrote to Herbert, “There are ample forces to quell the [Draft] Riots in New York City. Word has come in that the B. F. Hoxie was burned by the Rebel Florida on June 16.” When Capt. Fish took it to New York, the insurance rates were so exorbitant that he did not get it covered. Many people in Mystic had a lot of money in the B. F. Hoxie, including Ellery. The cargo alone was valued at over $100,000.00, but most of that was British owned.

During the summer Herbert contracted malaria, and after the fall of Vicksburg, came home by way of Cairo and Chicago. On August 7 Ellery went up to Norwich to get
Herbert and see the other boys of the 26th Conn. Regiment. He noted that Herbert had chills and fever. They continued day after day. “Herbert whittles down fast.” He died the following Spring.

The *Vicksburg* was launched on August 27, 1863. The work at the yard continued heavy with mostly steamers being launched. On October 15 the George Greenman & Co. yard was destroyed by fire, including the steam mill and shops, mold loft and all their tools and models. They never recovered from the blow. *Ellery* bought their factory engine and boiler for $1,500.

There were no contract overruns with the government in those days. With increasing inflation it was difficult to make any money. “Everything is on springs. Some men stood out today for an hour nooning [instead of a half hour], and to quit at sunset.” Three days later “About fifteen men broke off work, standing out for a shorter time. I told the men the next day that it could not go here until it did in the other yards, and said it was not fair.” The men kept on at the same hours.

In November 1864 *Ellery* started carving the mold for a new ship *Seminole*, 196 feet 1511 tons. It was launched the following July 11. Capt. Joseph Warren Holmes had a hand in it from start to finish, and afterward made the record run from New York to San Francisco in ninety-six days. Two weeks later there was a picnic for all workers and their families on Nauyaug Point, Masons Island. Thirty bushels of clams, 500 ears of green corn, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, 50 watermelons, nut melons and peaches were provided. A man from Rocky Point put on the bake, and there were four musicians for plenty of swings, dancing, etc. In December he notes that the Propeller *Constitution* Capt. William Greenman was a total loss on Cape Lookout Shoals. Forty men were lost out of fifty-four.

As soon as the war ended, the shipbuilding boom stopped. Only a brig and a schooner were launched in 1866 and two schooners in 1867. *Ellery* was reduced to puttering around the house and doing odd jobs. In August he was building a coal bin for Capt. Fish. A lot of the time he and Fish were trying to collect the balance of the payments on the vessels they had built. Some of the owners had gone broke.

In 1866 he served a term in the Legislature; meeting that year in the Greek marble “temple” on the New Haven Green. They met alternate years in Hartford. Writing to sister Eliza visiting in Berlin, New York, he said “We failed to get the bridge across the Connecticut River, but will keep trying. Have not got any new job yet, business is very dull. I sold the house where Bradley lives to Charles Fenner [little Charlie from Wisconsin].”

*Ellery* was always active in the Seventh-Day Baptist Church at Greenmanville. In January 1868 word got out that Mrs. Livermore, the minister’s wife, had left her husband. The Deacons met at Livermore’s house and charged him with “corresponding improperly with a young woman in Lebanon, Ct.” It was a stormy meeting and Livermore was suspended. He later became head of DeRuyter Institute, the Seventh-Day Baptist school in Madison County, New York. The Livermores ended up with a church at Big Foot Prairie, Wisconsin through which the Philip Fenners had gone twenty-six years before.
They always kept on good terms with the Maxsons. “Judge not lest ye be judged.”

In 1869 everything was put into building the ship Dauntless, 181 feet 995 tons, one of the finest of the clippers. Most of the money Ellery made during the war was in it. In 1870 Capt. Fish died. The yard lay idle and went into bankruptcy. The whole thing which included Ellery’s house was put up at auction. One of the major creditors Charles P. Williams of Stonington would not allow the house to be sold, and even paid for young Emily’s schooling for several years. There is a pathetic entry in her diary at the time of the auction when she was fifteen. Upset at the thought of facing the other girls, she refused to go to school, but after a few days was persuaded by her parents to continue.

In 1873 Alexander Irving, a neighbor up the hill, proposed that he and Ellery start up the yard again. Presumably Irving was to put up most of the money. Ellery’s wife Sarah Maria went to Westerly to draw out her nest egg from the bank. Maxson & Irving was formed, and built small craft and lighters for two years and then gave up. In 1883 the Dauntless was lost at Buttalo Bay, East London, South Africa, and with it the rest of Ellery’s investment.

There is a letter from Livermore in Wisconsin “You have read ‘Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.’ I have no doubt but great worldly prosperity is one of the greatest barriers to vital piety that has ever existed. How well did our Savior understand the tendency and influence of wealth over the destiny of man when he said ‘How hardly shall
they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God.’”

I doubt if Ellery needed the reminder from the Rev. Mr. Livermore about the disadvantages of worldly prosperity. He accepted his failure in business without bitterness or resentment. He remained a hero to his family and nine grandsons, two of whom were named for him. There were three Allyn boys and six Maxsons born between 1872 and 1885. Their tales of Grandfather Maxson were always warm with admiration and affection. He lived to be seventy-seven.

Figure 5. William Ellery Maxson, 1818-1895.

Ellery was a large, well-built and handsome man, the result of many generations of closely related yeoman stock. My grandmother Emily Maxson Allyn always spoke of her father as being such a gentle man. On the other hand, she liked to tell of the time when he was walking across to the shipyard and a young calf, tethered in the pasture, butted him in the back and knocked him down. Ellery picked up a scantling and hit the calf over the head, knocking it out cold. Another time in one of her fits of annoyance, Emily exclaimed “It’s a shittin shame!” At my surprised look she bridled and said “Oh, that’s what my father always said.”

Charles Potter, the youngest son, became a captain for the Morgan, later the Southern Pacific Lines, and ran out of New York longer than any steamer captain before or since. One of the features of his trips to New Orleans was the stories he would tell to the assembled passengers after dinner. For all his contacts with the cosmopolitan world, he never lost his rough Yankee humor, or contact with the families of his sea-going friends. Writing to Emily in 1937 when he was seventy-five, Charlie told about an
Figure 6. W. E. Maxson Family at Old Field, right to left: W. E. Maxson, Sarah Maria, Herbert, Aunt Eliza, Arthur L., Arthur’s wife Mary, their son Charles Ryley Maxson, and two unidentified neighbors. (Photograph by Alden Photo Co., Boston, Massachusetts.)
invitation from Mrs. Capt. Jacobs to a “Tom and Jerry” party.

“I told her I was too old to join parties and a very little drink caused me to tell stories that were not always parlor topics. She scolded me considerably and said she wished I would stop calling myself old, and I didn’t seem old to the rest of them and they thought I was the best company among the men and not old at all. I replied ‘Well Margery nearly every time I go to the urinal I find I spatter my shoes all up.’ She looked at me and said ‘Uncle Charlie there isn’t anyone in this party that supposes you knock the boards off the fences.’ ”

Figure 7. Sarah F. M. Maxson, 1825-1916. (Photograph by Jordan’s, New London, Connecticut.)

SARAH MARIA FENNER MAXSON. Great-grandmother Sarah Maria Fenner [4] had been back from Wisconsin for three years when in 1849 she married Ellery Maxson, a widower with two little boys, Herbert Ellery aged seven and Arthur Livingston aged two. She was twenty-four. Her first two girls died within a year of birth, and Emily was born in 1855.

In 1866 Maria was taking care of her aunt Lydia Hiscox in Westerly, leaving eleven year old Emily in charge. “Be good to Silie and Charlie and give them plenty to eat. Tell your father to kill lots of my hens if he wants them.” In 1870 after the business failed, she began taking in boarders, which she continued for several years. By 1872 seventeen year old Emily was spending a lot of her time visiting relatives in Norwich and Preston. Her mother wrote “Don’t eat out your welcome in Norwich, and don’t be flirting with the young men.” Two years later Emily was still at it. This time her father wrote “Your
Mother thinks you had better come home.” By the spring of 1875 she became engaged to Louis Packer Allyn, but still continued her visits to Norwich. On March 19 her mother wrote “Last night your dearie came and spent the evening, ha ha ha. Charlie and I played checkers with him.” They were married in October 1876.

By 1883 the year Maxson and Irving sold out the shipyard, Maria was very much involved in selling the property. Ellery was one of the top ship designers in the country, and a good yard foreman, but was not much of a businessman. By then Emily’s two little boys Louis and Ges were frequent visitors at Old Field, since their mother and father were often away where his fishing business took him. Maria wrote to Emily

“I told Louis [aged twelve] to say his prayers because God was good to him. He told me ‘Yes, I should think so, but he made the cold wind blow on my back enough.’ He told me too he heard a rat chomping at night. I think Louie needs some clothes and go to school. It is time he was learning something. I am making two pairs of drawers for Ges. He said the old ones would do, they were only dirty a little way out the back way. Louie laughed and said he guessed he had s--t on them. Ges raised his hand dramatically and said ‘It’s the biggest lie I ever heard.’ ”

A letter in August 1884 describes a meal. “For dinner we are going to have fresh beef (the old cow), nice sweet apples, vegetables, gems. Just finished the tongue with cabbage and things.”

By 1891 with her children grown up, Maria spent a lot of time visiting relatives in Westerly and New York State. From son Sile’s in Rochester she wrote home:

“Buildings are ten stories high. Rena stepped on an elevator to go to the second floor. It stopped at the seventh. She said she thought she was going to Heaven, and when she came down, thought she was going to see McGinty. [There was a popular song at the time ‘Down went McGinty to the bottom of the sea.’] We went to the Powers Art Gallery. [Hiram Powers was a very popular and commercially successful sculptor.] The building was eleven stories high and a tower three above that. Mr. Powers says ‘Let them build as high as they please. I will build where I can p--s in their chimneys.’ In 1812 Mr. Powers lived in a log cabin on this spot.

We went to church on Sunday. I can’t say as the girl did who went to Paris that she attended Notadam Church. Central Presbyterian is the most beautiful church I ever saw, holds 4,000. In there you might think half the people are making beer and the other half drinking it.”

Maria was an ardent Prohibitionist, and a founder of the W.C.T.U. chapter in Mystic.

In 1895 son Charlie wrote from New Orleans where his ship stopped on the way to Galveston. “Can’t find anyone here who knows or cares about the killing of some niggers, the most cowardly and brutal act I ever heard of in my whole life, and for not any offense more than they were working for an honest living.”

Ellery died in 1895. By 1898 Sile had lost his job with the Singer Sewing Machine
Co. and brought his family home to live at the Old Field house. His wife got very peculiar and insisted they owned the house. She became so unpleasant that Sile did not come home, but sent her money, and Maria would not come home herself. Sile wrote her “I am like a ship at sea without a rudder and cannot steer. I simply cannot move them myself but will write to [brother] Willie and appeal to him.” The dispute caused a rupture in the family which continued for years. The ones on “our” side insisted that she was just being onery; but on reading all the correspondence on the subject, my own feeling is that she had simply become unbalanced. It was not until about twenty-five years later that Emily’s son Lou invited all the estranged cousins to a family picnic. After lots of tears on both sides, they all came. By that time no one was sure what the original dispute had been about.

*Sally* must have written hundreds of verses during her life, many on religion and the evils of drink. On one occasion, each member of the W.C.T.U. had to earn a dollar and describe how they did it. *Sally*’s is as follows:

Well, I have earned a dollar too
And I will tell you how I did it
It is quite an easy thing to do
If your heart is only in it.

So I went one day when cold and bleak
And stormy was the weather
And helped Mrs. Coates undress some fowl,
And we picked off every feather,
She paid me well for what I did
And I was glad to do it
So I went home much pleased that night
And all my people knew it.

And then I cut my husbands hair
And I made him look so funny,
He was just as pleased as he could be,
And I said “hand out your money”
And then I mended up some clothes,
(A trade I like to follow)
They looked so nice I charged a price,
and here I give my dollar.

I was visiting one day not very far away
And helping around ’bout my rations,
When I spied some pans of tin
With many holes therein
And they bothered like the troubles of the nation.
Now I knew how to mend them
So they would not have to send them
To the tinman, or to throw them away,
But I said I would not do it
And very well they knew it
Unless they gave me money for my pay.

So I went to mending tin ware,
And I mended everything there,
All the tin pans, and a skittle and a tray
Then I went to John O. Fishes
And mended more tin dishes,
And I made a half a dollar the first day.

Then I went to Captain Wilbur's
And I got a contract there
To overhaul some vessels
Which needed slight repair.

I did not see the Captain,
But his wife paid all the bills,
And so I went on mending
Up and down the hills.

And my story now is ended,
Still I have somewhat to say,
If ever you go mending
As I have done today,
Take soft solder with you,
You will always find 'twill pay.

The only time I remember seeing Grandma Maxson was on her ninety-first birthday on January 7, 1916, when I was seven years old. She was tucked into her own big "Abraham Lincoln" bed at her daughter Emily's, where she spent her last few years. A little wizened brown face peeked out of the bedclothes. Three weeks later she died; having been born when John Quincy Adams was President.

PORTERSVILLE

In 1840 Mistic, as Old Mystic was then called, was still the chief settlement in the valley. It lay at the head of tidewater on the east-west Post Road. There were two banks and some commercial establishments. Farther down the river where there was deeper
water, a little settlement was growing up on the west shore on the original Packer grant, and called Portersville. The Packer family in the old homestead, which is still standing, ran a horse and passenger ferry across to the east shore. From the landing south of the house the road ran northwest up the hill on what is now Latham Street to join the road to New London. Near the top of the hill was another old Packer house built about 1767 and used as a tavern. A cart path ran north to Old Mystic along what is now High Street. Albert G. Wolf had a small farm on the point lying between the cove where Pearl Street now runs and the Mystic River.

On the east side of the river a road ran from the ferry landing up Willow Street across the Denison farm to climb over Slaughterhouse Hill toward Stonington Point. Another cart path ran from an old Denison house at the head of Willow Street down the present Denison Avenue to the family graveyard and Pequotsepos Cove. As early as 1819 a rough little bridge for oxcarts had been built across the river on the site of the present bridge, but the track across Wolf’s farm had to cross another little bridge on the Pearl Street cove to reach the gravel beach running south along the shore, which later became Water Street. When Pearl Street was first laid out, it ran along the west side of the cove up to St. Mark’s Church, which accounts for some of the houses being set so far back from the present street.

In 1838 the Greenman brothers began the little community of Greenmanville around their new shipyard on the east shore, but already shippers from Old Mystic were building wharfs and warehouses on both sides of the river by the bridge and ferry to accommodate their larger vessels. A few years later the Mallorys started their shipyard south of the Greenmans and bought up a large tract either side of Willow Street and laid out Broadway for building lots. Main Street was extended east across the marsh on a log road to connect with it.

On the west side of the river in Portersville a little commercial center was building up north of the Packer house and ferry landing. Joseph S. Avery built his house and store there, but other traders and sea captains built their houses along Gravel Street on the river.

GURDON S. ALLYN, CARPENTER. Gurdon Spicer Allyn [4], the ninth child of Capt. Rufus Allyn, Jr. and Freelove Morgan, was born in Ledyard in 1816, and named for a friend and family connection. He spent his early years on the farm and sometimes went to sea with his father. In 1838 at the age of twenty-two, he married nineteen year old Hannah Avery, daughter of Joseph Swan Avery, also of Ledyard. She was already the widow of Alden Rathbun of Mystic. The Allyns’ first child appeared to have died at birth, and the date is not even recorded. There is only a small red sandstone marker in the Lower Mystic Cemetery reading JAMES. The next child Francis, named for a successful whaling captain cousin in Montville, was not born until 1843, and he only lived about five months. By then Gurdon had bought up the farm from his parents and the other heirs, but decided that a farmer’s life was not for him and struck off as a carpenter. One of his first jobs was doing some repairs for Capt. Richard Burnet down at Burnet’s Corners. For the rest of his life Gurdon
saved all his bills and statements. The ones for this job showed that he worked twenty-three days at the rate of $15.00 a month, for a total of $13.27. The working day then was ten hours, and for many years thereafter. His time, then, came to \( \frac{94}{24} \) an hour. A first class mechanic got \( \frac{15}{24} \).

Capt. Burnet retired from the sea that year and decided to build a stagecoach inn on his property. The railroad already ran from New Haven to New London, and from Providence to Stonington. He did not anticipate that within ten years the New Haven, New London & Stonington Railroad would build the last link, except for a bridge across the Thames. Gurdon had proved himself to be a smart young man and a hard worker, so Burnet engaged him to build the new house. It probably helped too that Gurdon joined the Charity Lodge of Masons to which his father and Burnet belonged. There were no professional architects in those days, except in the largest cities, so Gurdon designed the two story L-shaped building in the newly popular Greek Revival style. In the top story Burnet had built a lodge room for Charity Lodge, of which he had just become Master. Most of the seafaring men in Mystic were members and a close knit group anyway. No doubt that helped Gurdon get other jobs in Mystic over the next few years.

One of the first things Gurdon bought when he started the job was a brass wheel clock from G. H. Smith for $4.25. It was a five mile walk down from the farm and he wanted to be on the job before the other men. William Keeney put in the foundation and chimneys for \( \frac{17\frac{1}{2}}{24} \) an hour. George W. Packer and his helper Oscar got \( \frac{25}{24} \) an hour between them. Henry Latham got \( \frac{10}{24} \) an hour for carting and rough work. The brothers Josiah and Joseph Gallup sawed and hauled the oak and chestnut framing. Frink and Prentis in New London supplied some of the lumber and Cottrell & Hoxie of Mystic, now

Figure 8. Gurdon S. Allyn, Carpenter, 1816-1876. (Photography by Bundy and Williams, New Haven, Connecticut.)
the Cottrell Lumber Company, most of the rest. Lumber was not delivered but priced at
the yard. Spruce framing cost $12.50/M (per thousand board feet), box boards were
$16.00, clapboards $8.00/M running feet. Capt. Crary, master of the sloop *Emily*,
brought him 42 mahogany balusters from New York costing $5.25 and “Albany” sawed
shingles for $3.25/M. Ebenezer Morton furnished the cut stone. He also cut gravestones,
and much of his fine work still exists around Mystic today.

With a day’s pay running between $1.00 and $1.50, food prices were equally low.
Williams and Larkin in Mystic charged 6¢ a pound for lamb, 4¢ for liver and beef. Baby
Hannah was born before the job was finished. Mother Hannah never was well so Gurdon
always bought plenty of meat. There was not much else he could do for her. The bill from
Dr. Benjamin F. Stoddard for 33 house calls and medicine that year ran to $10.90.

In 1845 with his profit from the Burnet job, Gurdon bought a lot from his father-
in-law “Uncle Joe” Avery between Fort Rachel and the river. There he started his own
Greek Revival house embellished with two story pilasters and a fine cut stone basement.
He called himself Carpenter, but today we would probably call him Master Builder. At
the same time he built the stone bulkhead on the river. The first delivery was a load of
2,500 hard brick by Capt. Stark from New York. They cost $5.25/M, and the softer
“samon” brick cost less. The lime and cement came from New York too. Everything else
was bought locally. Ebenezer Morton put in the foundation and steps. Sanford Stark, who
had started his own finishing mill, furnished the inside doors for $1.00 each. The outside
doors were $2.00. Daniel D. Edgecomb did the mahogany work. The “nuel” post cost
37¢ and a ball for the top 7 cents. Since most of the workmen lived up in the country,
Gurdon boarded them with D. A. Daboll for 10¢ a meal. Later in the summer some had
noon dinner with R. W. Smith at 9½ cents. Baby Hannah was still ailing when the house
was finished so they did not move in right away. She died that spring. Mother Hannah was
pregnant with Harriet, their third child, who was to die in December.

Even before his own house was finished, Gurdon contracted to build two others.
One was for Joseph L. Denison at the head of the Cove north of St. Mark’s Church.
Denison had trouble making payments so Gurdon put a lien on the house for $254.00
which was finally paid off. It now belongs to Virgil Huntley. The other house was for
Marvin B. Avery at 17 Broadway on a lot he had bought from Cottrell C. Mallory. The
contract price was $776.00. It now has a wing on the back and is owned by Dorris
Bindloss. Marvin had married Mary Swan Avery, Hannah’s half sister. Marvin could not
make his payments either, so two years later Gurdon put a lien on the place. Soon after
he bought it for $786.62, and Marvin moved to Georgia to go into the lumber business
like many other Mystic men. Marvin died at Columbus on the Chattahoochie River in
1861, and Mary came back to Mystic. Their daughter Ellen Frances married Dr. Elias F.
Coates who came to Mystic from Plainfield, Connecticut. He and his son Frank Avery
Coates had an office for many years. Frank married Julia Beebe, but had no children, so
the portrait and furniture of her great-grandfather Robert N. Avery were left to our
branch of the family.

After 1841 when the owners of the old bridge across the river replaced it with a
wider one, Wolf began leasing sites for stores on his farm along what later became West Main Street. Gurdon took the contract to build the two story store building at the east corner of Gravel Street. New houses and stores were going up on both sides of the river with the surge in shipbuilding. Labor was scarce so he let out that part of the work to O. J. Noyes & Co. of New York. The price was $556.00 and the extras came to $190.00. The job was finished on December 24, 1846, and three weeks later Noyes put a lien on for non-payment. The case was dismissed when it was brought out that the final payment was not due until six months after completion. Gurdon had learned something from his first two jobs. Everyone was doing business on credit, but it was the custom then for suppliers to charge monthly interest on unpaid bills. Unlike today, they did not have to figure carrying charges into their sales prices.

In 1849 Gurdon built a house for Capt. Peter Forsyth on Forsyth Street. Prices were going up fast. Cottrell's bill alone came to $1,150.00. With the discovery of gold in California that year, there was a drain on manpower and all kinds of building materials. Prentis & Learned in New London wrote Gurdon: "About the flooring we sold you,
Mr. Learned found the one inch already sold. We hope you can make the balance in yellow pine at a low price. I do not believe there is a brick in the place. Almost all the lumber in town is about taken up for California.”

**SKIPPER STREET.** Until about 1850 the sea captains and traders had been living in simple houses on the river. Now that there was more money to spend, they began buying sizable lots on the hill to build in the newly fashionable Italianate style. The Fish family laid out a new street across part of their original grant running from the Nathan G. Fish house on New London Road down to the Maxson and Fish shipyard at Old Field in West Mystic. The first deeds called it Skipper Street, the name still commonly used by old timers. Now it is dignified by the name West Mystic Avenue.

The colonial farmhouse style was out of date. Following the demand for something new, publishers began turning out books illustrating Greek Revival and wooden Gothic. *Gurdon* had bought a copy of Minard LaFever’s *Modern Building Guide* and was using many of the details in his latest work. There were not only plans and elevations, but entrance details and diagrams for building stairways. During the period from 1840 to 1860 the less expensive houses continued to be built in modified Greek Revival, that is with two full stories; the gable end facing the street to fit on the small sized town lots. The Skipper Street houses in Italianate style were square with two full stories low-pitched hip roofs with large eaves and a cupola or “Captain’s walk” on top. The front door was placed in the middle, with a winding stairway running through the central hall all the way up to the cupola. Two chimneys with fireplaces heated the rooms on either side. In the days before central heat no one tried to heat the halls anyway. Another feature was the large paneled windows in pairs.

*Gurdon* built the first house on Skipper Street for Capt. Gustav Appleman, which later belonged to the Burrows family. It had the old style six over six light windows, but otherwise followed the new Italianate style with the kitchen in the basement. With plenty of household help coming over from Ireland in the wake of the potato famine, housewives were more interested in style than in convenience. Houses for Captains Manwaring, Rowland and Washington came next, but the designer-builders are not known. *Gurdon* may have built some of them, and most likely the next ones, including the Stark house. A set of block planes he had made for moldings fit some of the trim; and some of the bills for materials and subcontracting bore these names, but usually the name of the job was not put down. No plans for these and other houses survive, if there ever were any more than dimensioned sketches.

He built other houses in 1852 and 1853. There was one for brother Amos on New London Road, sturdy but undistinguished in design. Then there was the Bailey house farther down Skipper Street, and the Burrows house near the lower end of High Street. This last was very much in the Victorian style with large decorated eaves and heavy walnut moldings and stair rail. It was the most pretentious up to that time. Unlike all the others, it has since been torn down. He built his last house for William C. Rathbun on Parks Point down below the old Parks house. It could not have stayed there very long for
they soon ran the approach to the new railroad trestle across the site.

**MYSTIC RIVER.** As Portersville grew in importance, its name was changed in 1850 to Mystic River. Shortly after the settlement across the river was named Mystic Bridge. Mistic or Head of Mystic became Old Mystic. In 1851 the Mystic River Bank was organized and *Gurdon* was given the contract for the new building. It was in the form of a little columned Greek Temple, painted to look like brownstone. The building specifications are preserved but the designer is unknown. Two thousand shares went on sale at $50.00 a share. *Gurdon* bought eight shares at only $5.00 each. The big discount was probably given as part payment for his work.

In July of 1851 *Louis Packer Allyn* [3] was born in the Water Street house. Juliaett, born two years before, had six more years to live. A cow was bought for milk for the children. George Wolf put in a bill of $7.50 for pasturing it on Mrs. Fish's land. A new crib from W. Buhler in New York cost $3.75. *Gurdon* bought a “Congress” hat there too, and a silk plush “cap” for *Hannah* for $2.25 from William Meeker. After that he bought his hats from Lewis Crossman in New York, a “Kossuth” hat for $1.50 and a straw hat for $1.00. Crossman also sold him a buffalo robe for $6.00. They all came on the sloop *Emily* with the masons' supplies.

**STEPHEN A. PACKER.** In 1852 *Gurdon* had started another house on Skipper Street, this time for his brother-in-law Stephen Packer, who could ill afford it as it turned out. The job was started in October but work stopped in December because no payments had been made on the $2,070.00 contract. *Gurdon* put a lien on the property, calling himself “Mechanic” rather than “Carpenter,” a step up in the social scale. Packer found enough money to get the job going again, but three years later gave *Gurdon* a mortgage deed for $1,243.00. By then interest had run up to $782.00 plus $106.59 interest on the Cottrell bill. Packer moved out to a farm in Plainfield, Connecticut and the house was sold to Capt. Sisson.

We all know someone like Stephen Packer, irresponsible, but warm-hearted for all that. He wrote from Plainfield:

"Friend Gurdon. Will you call on Mr. Albert Fish and if he has not got any place yet say to him that he may come up and I will do the best I can for him. Ask him if he has any means to move him up and get him started until his children are learned a little. Get from him just his standing. No guess work from the women folks. He must fetch all the children with him. See to this. I thought I saw a disposition to have some of the largest stay back. They will have to support the small ones that go to school. Have him fetch a Stove if he can. If he can not move by railroad for want of funds he will have to get Tom Fish or some one to fetch his things up. He said he had 30 or 40 dollars in cash. If so he will get along, if not his friends must do it as it will be all we can do after they are here to keep along. This you will take upon yourself for
the good of Humanity and charge it to Probono Publico. I was to have written to Nathan [G. Fish], but as he has not spare time I select you, and as this is the first time you have held public office for the good of the people you are no doubt proud of it. If there should be an addition to the family of the right sex, it shall be called after you. Yours, S. A. Packer."

He was probably referring to Gurdon being a Selectman. The baby must have been a girl, for I never heard of a Gurdon Packer. Nathan Fish, the wealthiest member of a large family, was no doubt always being hit up for help.

**ICE BUSINESS.** With all the new money and building in Mystic in 1853, there was still no village-wide supply of ice. Silas Beebe had built a little brick icehouse at the head of Beebe Cove and dammed the small stream that ran into it from the north, but he had supplied mostly fishermen before the railroad trestle was built across the Cove. Gurdon, aware that the building boom had passed its peak, took a ten year lease on the property with friend Stephen Packer. Packer must have been a good talker, because he was already behind on the payments for his new house. He soon sold out to Gurdon. The $80.00 a year lease gave him the right to build a new icehouse and dam. He did not have to pay the first year's rent if the facilities were not ready in time for the season. He wasted no time, however, but quickly cleared the land for a larger pond; built a new cut stone dam and put up a new icehouse. The full year’s rent was paid.

The business did well from the start, so he built two new dams and icehouses, one at Old Mystic on the Groton side, and the other at the head of Hewitt Road on Mistuxet Avenue. The pond there was shallow, and is now grown up with brush and trees. Ice brought 25¢ a 100 pounds. The list of customers read like the who's who for Mystic: George Ashbey, Marvin Avery, Joseph S. Avery, J. L. Babcock, John and William Batty, Stephen Bennett, Capt. Ambrose Burrows, Capt. Benjamin Burrows, Rhodes Burrows, Nathan Chapman, William and Horace Clift, Dr. Alfred Clift, William Collins, Joseph Cottrell, Dudley, Elisha and Oliver Denison, Lyman Dudley, William Douglass, Godfrey Edgecomb, George Eldredge, Charles Fairbanks, Asa and Nathan Fish, Peter Forsyth, Gurdon Gates, Oliver Grant, Charles Grinnell, Godfrey Heath, William Higgins, Dexter Irons, Charles, George and Henry Mallory, Ellery Maxson, George Moon, Denison Noyes, Frank Palmer, James and William Parks, Isaac and Silas Randall, J. Rathbone, Amos Ryley, Henry Sabins, Burrows Sawyer, Capt. Smith, Russell Stark, Amos Tift, Caleb Tufts, J. F. Trumbull, James Waterman and Orlando Wheeler. There were more, but several pages of the account book are missing. The children used it for a cutout and coloring book.

Juliaett started school in 1853. It must have been like a nursery school, for she was only four. There was a bill from the Fifth School District for 132 days amounting to $1.97. District schools had their own rates and taxes, which continued into the 1920's. Another separate tax in those days was the Highway Tax. This had come down from the earliest colonial days when a man had to put in two days' work a year to keep the roads
in shape. That year, Gurdon's assessment for running the new town road from Groton Bank to Gales Ferry came to $4.19. He had Henry R. Spencer do the work for his bill. Gurdon continued to buy his hats in New York. In keeping with the new fashions and his financial standing, he bought two silk hats in one year for $2.00 each. A fur hat cost $2.50. Another plush cap for Hannah was $2.00. Tailor made suits were yet to come.

In 1854 the towns of Groton and Stonington bought up the franchise for the Mystic River bridge and built a sturdier bridge with a swing span supported by cables. The west approach across Albert G. Wolf's land was made a public highway. Wolf leased more lots for commercial buildings and built his own three story block on piles over the water on the north side. The hall on the upper floors became the center of village activities for many years. Burned off in 1880 and again in 1915, it was first called Floral Hall and the second time Central Hall. The ground floor shops are still there today. Pearl Street cove was not filled in until about thirty years later.

Figure 10. Wolf Block with Wood Swing Bridge. (Photograph by H. D. Utley, New London, Connecticut.)

**BONY FISHING.** One of the most common fish along the east coast is the fat Brevoortia Tyrannus, called by Roger Williams "Munnawhatteaug." "Mummiechaug" probably came from the same Indian word. The name most commonly used in Vineyard Sound, Buzzards Bay and Narragansett Bay was "Menhaden." Another Indian word was "Poghaden," whence the name "Pogy" or "Porgy." This was the commonest name everywhere, and is still used today. The French farther north pronounced it "Pookagen." From the Connecticut River to Stonington it was called "Bonyfish," which best describes it.
This was the fish that the Indians used at Plymouth to fertilize their corn. The settlers used them for many generations, later plowing them into the soil. After constant use, however, the soil became saturated with oil, and the custom had to be abandoned. It was not until about 1850 that a method was developed to separate the oil, and “scrap” or “pomice” came into great demand everywhere for fertilizer. In 1850 the schooner Slendid out of Cape Ann was the first to fish for pogies off the coast of Maine. Purse seines were set from whaling dories, which were later adapted for porgy fishing. Sloops and some schooners were used until about 1870 when steamers came into use. At first the fish were processed in a “kettle works,” where they were cooked on shore in the same kettles that were used aboard whale ships. The oil was drawn off and the scrap was spread on wooden platforms to dry. It is easy to imagine the smell from this operation, especially since there was no need to keep the fish fresh.

Probably the first two kettle works in the Mystic area were run by John Chapman and his son Reuben on Ram Point, Masons Island, and by John Green on Latimer Point, sometimes known as Moss Point. This latter was soon taken over by Leander Willcox and continued by his family for many years.

About 1853 when the building boom slackened off, and the ice business was well in hand, Gurdon set up his own kettle works on the east shore of Masons Island. Since the season ran from about April until late in the Fall, it fitted in very well with his ice business. To extract more oil, a screw press was used to squeeze out the cooked fish. The residue or “gurry” was sometimes cooked again to produce an inferior grade of oil, which brought only about one-third the price of the best grade oil.

It had many uses. It was mixed with the more expensive whale oil for use in miners’ lamps, and with turpentine to make “camphene.” It was a good, although smelly, vehicle for boat paint, and was mixed with linseed oil for house paint. It was even used for a time for lubricating, but unlike petroleum oil then coming into use, it tended to harden. The best grade oil was bleached in the sun in shallow pans and used for packing sardines. The dried scrap competed with the bird guano; newly introduced by a whaling captain returning light from a long voyage, who picked up a load from the islands off Peru.

G. S. ALLYN & CO. When the building business tapered off, Gurdon in 1856 turned his full attention to processing bonyfish with a production line operation. He put up a factory farther down the Island on the site of the present Yacht Club. After trying out various arrangements he applied for a patent on his method which soon became used throughout the whole rapidly growing industry. He never made any money on the patent, but continued to make improvements over the next twenty years. Basically it was a double hull boiler with steam run between the outer and inner hulls which first cooked the fish and then dried the scrap. Inside the inner hull were rotating blades like an old-fashioned lawn mower which stirred and chopped the fish while it was cooking. The oil could then be drawn off and the gurry run through a hydraulic press which he developed. It was claimed in the advertisement that the smell would be greatly reduced. Perhaps it was, but I remember when the Wilcox factory was still running on Latimer Point back in
the 1920's that the smell was pretty strong. The town finally passed an ordinance that they could only operate when the wind was offshore, but the cooking operation could not be stopped whenever the wind shifted.

From plans Gurdon devised, the Union Machine Co. run by H. A. Alexander made patterns and molds and some of the castings. The Mystic Bridge Machine Co. owned by Joseph O. Cottrell furnished a steam engine and pipe and other castings. The Reliance Machine Co. controlled by the Randall family built the furnace and supplied iron and rivets. Seeing the money to be made, Gurdon and a cousin built a two story shop for Allyn & Morgan to supply his own needs.

At the beginning he bought all his fish from local fishermen, Captains Burrows, Holdredge, Sabin and Willcox. Some of the Willcoxes continued to be his main suppliers, even after he had his own boats and the Willcoxes their own factory. They often brought in more than $2,000.00 worth a month during the season. Most of the oil was shipped to New York on the sloop Emily by Capt. J. W. Freeman, who had taken over from Capt. Stark. One load of 5,580 gallons on board the sloop Apollo was sold through W. L. J. A. Warner, Oil Dealer. Much of the "pumice" was sold locally to farmers and tradesmen as part payment on their bills. William Chadwick of Old Lyme handled a lot.

In the summer of 1857 Gurdon started paying himself $2.00 a day out of the business, but with plant expansion, he was getting in over his head. That winter he borrowed $1,541.00 from his former neighbor in Ledyard, Elisha D. Wightman. The next April he sold a third interest to Wightman and George Langworthy for $865.90, and another third to George Andrews who was working for John Green on Latimer Point. The first two soon bought out Andrews, and with Gurdon formed a partnership called G. S. Allyn & Co.

As part of the operation, there was a two story cook shack farther up the hill where the men were fed. They bought a lot of beef from D. Bradford on Bradford's Island, later called Ram-goat or Ram Island. Other supplies came from D. N. Prentice, N. G. Fish & Co. and C. A. Jones, all of Mystic. William R. Fish supplied milk. When Andrew Mason refused to fix the old Ridingway Bridge, Gurdon paid Fish to replank it. The factory site was leased for $25.00 a year, and Mason never did raise the price. By the end of 1857 the partners agreed to pay Gurdon $100.00 a month for the four month season, but he probably did not get it all the time, for by the end of 1858 he drew $900.00 for two year's work.

HANNAH AVERY ALLYN. Two years after her mother Mary died Hannah had another girl Mary, who soon died like the others. G. E. Morgan charged $12.00 for the little coffin and $1.00 for the hearse. The next year eight year old Juliaett died. In later years my grandfather Louis used to tell how fond he was of his older sister, the only one he remembered.

Hannah herself died the next summer at the age of thirty-nine. All that I know of her is a letter written by Laura Allyn, daughter of Gurdon's brother Hiram, living in Webster, Massachusetts.
“Dear Uncle. I feel I must write you after hearing such sad news from your dear family. Cousin Luther [Morgan] wrote about a week before she died that she had met with an accident. Oh how sudden! Aunt Hannah dead! It could not be. Now she lies beside Juliaett. I did not expect to stay but a short time on my visit, but she said I must and I did. She said she thought the money you made on the Island would be lost some other way. She wanted you to go to meeting with her Sundays when you worked. Now Uncle Gurdon you let the old fish go and go to church Sabbath days for respect to her memory. I used to comb her hair often. Poor Louis he thought so much of his mother. What does he do? Do not work yourself to death, you are well enough off to let the other men do the hard work. Your respected niece, Laura.”

The death certificate signed by Dr. Coates says she died of Traumatic Erysipelas, sometimes called St. Anthony’s Fire. Usually started from a wound or abrasion, in severe cases it causes inflammation of the brain. It is doubtful if Gurdon went to church much before his own death eighteen years later. Louis aged seven went to stay with Aunt Gallup in the old Allyn “House Behind the Rock” in Ledyard. Gurdon worked harder than ever. Having just been forced to sell 2/3 interest in the business, he must have been sourly amused when Laura called him “well off.” I have often heard the same kind of remark myself.

It was about this time that he built the dams for an ice pond on the Island. In 1859
he and young Capt. Benedict Morgan set up another factory on Jupiter Point, Groton. In two years it had made enough money for Morgan to buy him out. Gurdon put that money into still another factory at Brooklin, Maine just north of Deer Island.

About a year after Hannah died, Gurdon married Martha Champion, whose father was a member of the fishing fraternity in East Lyme. He was then forty-three, and Martha was thirty-one. To welcome his new wife, he bought some new furniture from Melvin Chester & Co. of New London. There were six curly maple chairs for $16.50, a rocker for $8.50, and a sofa for $16.00. I remember the sofa well. It was hard-stuffed horsehair, and when I had to take a nap on it after Sunday dinner, the ends of the woven horsehair prickled. Whenever I dozed off I would slide off the sofa onto the floor. Martha had a son of her own about a year later, Gurdon Champion. He and Louis always had a great affection for each other, and Louis looked after his little brother for the rest of his life. Martha must have had a hard time giving birth, for she never had another child, and was a semi-invalid for the rest of her life.

*LUMBERING IN WISCONSIN.* With the expansion of the railroads in the 1850's, there was a great demand for lumber at St. Louis. In 1854 Elisha Wightman's brother went out to Wisconsin with some other local men to get out lumber and raft it down the Wisconsin River to the Mississippi. In 1858 Gurdon and his two fishing partners began buying large tracts of land in Juneau County and started operations in a big way. The business was named E. D. Wightman & Co., so presumably the Wightmans put up a good part of the money. Elisha Wightman and Langworthy moved West to run the new business, leaving Gurdon in charge of the fish works.

A mill was set up at Werner, Juneau County on the Wisconsin. It had been settled a few years before, along with another little village upstream named Germantown, by German immigrants. Werner was a typical lumbering village with two small hotels and other places of entertainment. When I went to locate it in 1978 I found that the site had long been under a reservoir. Maurice Warriner, an old timer in Mauston, the county seat, was the only one who remembered its existence.

Before the reservoir dam was built, the gravestones from the two little communities were moved to higher ground in the area now a state park. The Germantown stones were neatly arranged on one side and the Werner ones on the other. Among the Mystic names were: Joseph A. Noyes, a private in the 8th Wisconsin Light Artillery, Benjamin and Chester Higbee, and Julia Burnet, wife of Warren Burnet from Burnets Corners. She was born a Greenwood in Mystic, and died in Werner in 1875. After her death Warren came home to the Corners with his little daughter Clara, who had been born in Werner. Another stone was for Helen Greenwood, Warren's niece.

*THE GROWING FISH BUSINESS.* Back at the fish works the business continued to expand. Elnathan Wilcox was bringing in the most fish. He now got $1.00/M, up from 75¢ two years before. There was a draft from E. B. Philips, a broker in New York, for $5,548.00 for oil. E. H. Swain, another broker, in acknowledging a shipment, cautiously
said he would see what deal he could make; and warned that the market was off, but then went on to say that he could probably get a half cent above market! Most of the oil was still being shipped aboard the Emily, but one shipment to DeForest & Francis was made by the more expensive “propeller,” a steam vessel. On one trip Capt. Freeman brought back a bushel of oysters costing 75 cents.

Late in the fall of 1861 the boiler blew up at the factory seriously injuring Gurdon. I imagine he thought that at least the season was nearly over. Andrew Mason was drying himself in front of the fire when the blast blew him unharmed out through the door. In his usual taciturn way he rummaged through the wreckage for his shoes, and finding them, left for his home up the Island without a word.

By 1862 the partners decided to start getting their own boats. The first was the eleven year old schooner Game Cock; Thomas W. Rogers, Master, length 56’-4”, built in New London with a square stern and a “bullet” head. The Fitch and Rogers’ families were paid $1,275.00 for it. That same year they bought the lighter Burnside from C. H. Mallory & Co. who had been using it to carry freight from Norwich.

The next year they bought the schooner E. C. Scranton for $2,000.00, one half from Enoch N. Staplin and the other half from Reuben Chapman of Masons Island. Chapman gave up his own little business and went to work for the partnership in charge of the fishing. The schooner had been built at Madison fifteen years before, 72 tons and length 64’-0”. The same year John Palmer of Noank built them the sloop Nauyaug. The business was doing well enough for Gurdon to get $1,000.00 for his time and $2,000.00 in profits. They paid off a note with interest at the Mystic Bank for $2,294.00. Wightman, having bought out Langworthy, got $4,000.00.

In March of 1863 Albert Sisson & Co. brought in a load of 73,500 fish at $1.37/M, up from $1.00 in 1860, and 75¢ in 1858. Inflation from the Civil War and the increased demand were having their effect. In May they paid the Watch Hill Fishing Co., Daniel F. Larkin, the same price. By the middle of the season in June the price dropped a little, $1.25/M to C. H. Starr for a load of 125,600. The Willcox boats were still bringing in the largest amount, over $2,000.00 a month. The Scranton Capt. John H. Chapman, father of Reuben, carried most of the “fish guano” to Hartford for use on the tobacco fields, rapidly expanding now that tobacco from the South was cut off by the War.

By 1864 the price for fish was skyrocketing. William D. Potter of Westerly brought in a load of 267,000 for which he was paid $3.00/M. To keep up with the demand the business contracted with Hadley & Davis of Noank in 1865 to build two new sloops Hepsie and Hadley. They bought the schooner Rio and the sloop M. M. Moore. In 1867 C. H. Hadley, now on his own, built another 35 foot sloop and two 17 foot purse seine boats for $750.00. Painting, sails, and rigging were extra. About every family in Noank was engaged in building, hauling and repairs of boats—John and John, Jr. Palmer, R. H. Peckham, Thomas Williams, W. S. & C. Noyes, Charles H. Niles and Josiah A. Libby. E. Beebe and C. Barry made most of the sails. One of the most expensive items was the nets. C. H. Miner made one for $361.25; 289 feet long at $1.25 a running foot.

A continuous concern was getting enough oil casks, and barrels or bags for the
guano. Many oil barrels were bought from Charles Osgood, the paint dealer in Norwich, and from Joshua Thompson in New York. Many flour barrels came from Richard Mallory and Charles Mallory in Mystic. John G. Rathbun sold them 114 flour barrels at 14¢ each. There was a bill from L. I. Fiske & Co. of Hinsdale, New Hampshire for soap, always a necessity in such a dirty business. They did not scrimp on food for the boats and the factory crews. There was lots of beef at 13¢ a pound; up from 4¢ when Gurdon first began buying it thirteen years before.

Until the Civil War most of the Federal income came from import taxes and excise taxes on a few things like liquor and tobacco. Now it was not enough. In 1864 there was a license fee of $10.00 for manufacturers, which G. S. Allyn & Co. paid to the Third Collection District, East Woodstock, Windham County; the center of a prosperous farming area. A two cent revenue stamp was required on all checks and bills. Postage went from two to three cents. A flat 5% income tax was laid. Hard to believe at the present day, after the War postage was dropped back to 2½ and the income tax was abolished, not to be revived until 1914. A Federal tax was laid on each state, which was passed down to the towns to collect as a property tax. All property was taxed, including livestock, household furniture and stocks and bonds. Thus the new tax bills were for State, Town and Highways. Only the School Tax remained for each district within the town.

WEST MAIN STREET. When Albert G. Wolf built the three story Wolf Block with Floral Hall in 1854, it established West Main Street as the center of the business district. The Block, however, was heavily mortgaged and did not pay, so he was forced to start selling off lots, which he had formerly leased. Gurdon bought the building on Gravel Street just south of Wolf’s own house, now the site of the Christian Science Church. Wolf was still in over his head when he died in 1861, so the creditors divided the rest of the property into parcels and sold it off. The Stonington Savings Bank took over the Block, and in January 1862 sold it to the newly formed partnership of Mason R. Packer and Gurdon S. Allyn for $1,213.20. It continued down in the two families for several generations. My grandfather Allyn used to say it never paid until the two top stories burned off. Grandma, who owned an interest too, said it was the best investment she had. She got the rent checks, and Granddad paid the taxes and upkeep.

There were many new stores along the street. F. M. Manning, on the corner of Gravel Street, had one of the first. G. H. Heydecker repaired boots and shoes. A. C. Tift sold dress goods. Chesebrough & Davis sold Gurdon a pair of rubber boots for nine year old Louis for $1.95, a pair of shoes for 77¢ and a cap for 50¢. There is a bill from Thomas Parks, who lived down by St. Jago’s rock, for lobsters at 3¢ a pound. Edwin R. Gallup made a coat for Gurdon in 1862, one of his first tailor made. It cost $16.50. Now that he was becoming a substantial citizen, he could afford to dress the part. Louis was wearing out clothes fast. In one year he had a new suit made for $6.86 and a jacket and pants for $8.41. With the shipbuilding boom, two other tailors set up. E. Jackson made Gurdon a suit for $17.00, and A. Ryan made a coat and vest for George Evans, a young cousin whom Gurdon had taken in. George took care of the business accounts.
MYSTIC RIVER WATER WORKS. By 1863 there was still no central water system in Mystic. Gurdon, always with an eye for new business, persuaded Isaac Denison to go in with him to start a water company. There was a good spring belonging to Denison across from the foot of Godfrey Street, so 1/3 acre was set aside. By November Gurdon had bought out Denison’s 2/3 interest for $666.00. Some of the old wooden pipes, suitable for gravity feed, were dug up in recent years. The system was sufficient for downtown, especially the Packer, Allyn Block. Gurdon took care of the whole installation, even keeping the books and sending out bills. Water rates were payable a year in advance, with a 5% surcharge if not. In 1867 he sold 1/8 interest to his building partner Packer, describing the land as being on the road leading to the public schoolhouse. The road is now High Street, and the school, since moved south, was just north of the Baptist Church. The spring lot still belongs to the Mystic Valley Water Company, and is used for a pumping station.

In 1868 Gurdon bought from William Benjamin a location near the top of the hill just west of the little lane now called Allyn Street. There was plenty of water there, even in the dry season, since it was sealed with hardpan several feet down. To the north there was a large shallow pond, called Mabbett’s Pond, since filled in. He excavated and built a large round stonewalled reservoir with a wooden roof. Since it only supplied houses farther down the hill by gravity, it was abandoned sometime after his death.

LAND ON THE HILL. When Joseph Packer died in 1864, he was living in the old tavern on New London Road on land that had come down from the first Packers. There was still a large tract of land, and a great many heirs; including, the Grays, Edgecombs, Randalls, Rathbuns and Wilburs. With money coming in from the fish works, Gurdon began buying up what he could. From Sidney Ashbey and Eleanor Lamb, he bought their ¼ interest. After that, the land was divided up, and over the next two years he bought, except for a couple of lots, the block running from the houses along Elm Street up to Hannah Packer Lane, now Allyn Street. Facing on New London Road, it ran back to a lane running up the hill from the Baptist Church called Church Street or West Street. Since there was some question about its being a public road, he and some of the others bought title to it from Elisha Packer, Jr. and laid it out as public street, afterward called Library Street.

When Gurdon’s father-in-law Joseph S. Avery died in 1865 and left his wife with not much more than her big house on Water Street, Gurdon sold her his own house next door and took over the larger house, as well as the Swantown Hill farm where his sister Hannah Allyn Bailey was living. That same year he bought a small farm in the northern part of East Lyme near the Walnut Hill School for brother-in-law Stephen A. Packer, who had not made a go of it in Plainfield. Two years later Stephen wrote an amusing letter about the crops, and then added gleefully that a neighboring farmer who had said Allyn’s Guano was no good, now wanted to buy some more. Ever the helpful Rip Van Winkle, Packer said that if he knew when it could be shipped to New London, he would pick it up in his wagon, as he had to go into town for supplies anyway.
**GURDON GOES TO WISCONSIN.** By 1865 the Wightmans in Wisconsin found that it was all they could do to get out timber, so they proposed that Gurdon come out in the spring to take charge of selling down the Mississippi. The crews would cut the trees during the winter and haul the logs to the mill, where they were cut into framing dimensions, rough boards and laths. The lumber was made up into rafts to be floated down the Wisconsin River when it rose with the spring thaws. When the rafts were tied together they were called fleets. Gurdon went out that August, leaving Capt. John Eldredge in charge at the fish works. His first letter was from Werner. "Dear Mother [as he always called Martha] I leave for St. Louis in the morning. The last fleet left yesterday. Capt. Eldredge had better order the seine. Louie I expect is going to school. [He was then fourteen and often played hookey.] The young man I expect is trudging up the hill every morning although he said he would not do it. I shall send B. Miner home if he is unwell when I get down the river." Martha, brought up in the business in East Lyme, handled the office work.

The next March while Gurdon was still home getting ready for the fishing season he got a letter from Wightman in Werner.

"Your letter with draft and money arrived safely. Went to Mauston yesterday to get the shaft on sleds. They still cross the river on the ice. Bad weather for rafting. Have been repairing the levee some, but had to thaw the ground by burning slabs. There is prospect for a good drive as there is plenty of snow, but need plenty of rain. We have three floats coupled up. Expect to start the middle of April. You will be informed in time to meet it below. Think you had better go to St. Louis and come up this way. Six floats all together rafted fifteen deep, mostly pickets. The lath are all gone. I found a $10.00 bill on the Uncas Bank [Norwich] among money received. It is not payable this way."

Two weeks later Gurdon wrote from Alton, Illinois, a few miles up river from St. Louis. "I arrived here from Chicago. The cars run into a freight train. I leave Wednesday for Muscatine, Iowa [across the river from Rock Island]. Have sold some 800,000. Have given [brother] Amos the whole charge of the help. I will wait until the next fleet and can be home until Fall. Want to git a shingle mill before I leave. Write me how they git along at the Fish Works. I suppose Louis is going to school every day." The shingle mill was delivered by steamer War Eagle at LaCrosse on the Mississippi and consigned to Wightman at New Lisbon, Juneau County.

A month later he was still at Werner. "Your letter received from Clayton [Iowa across the river] after I left Mr. Larrabee [from Ledyard]. Tell George [Evans] I will pay Mr. Noyes on the boat when I get back. Sent fleet of about 900,000 and sold for $21.00/M. Very good. Parties from Hannibal [Missouri up river from St. Louis] liked our lumber and liked our way of business. It is less trouble to sell to them than to sell along the river. Louis must be a good boy and go to school." Martha had a pencil note on the back of the letter "900,000 x 21. = 18,900.00

On May 11, 1866, the same spring, Capt. Eldredge wrote:
“What little oil we made I have not disposed of, but think of taking a sample to New York next week. I left the schooner [Scranton] at Greenmans for repair until I hear from you. He says he will do it as well and as cheap as anyone. You spoke last Fall about putting her into the fruit business, but Quarantine laws are so rigid we would have to lay out too long and the fruit would rot. [The people in Boston who became the United Fruit Co. must have had some way around it.] There is no money in coal freight only $1.00 a ton from Elizabethport [New Jersey] to Providence. It is a good time to get her fixed up against something offered. George [Evans] could not find all the bills. I sent you drafts of $1,267. and $1,000. which would cover them. I had to settle up J. D. Fishes bill and the others here for $2,000.00 out of the $2,217.00 I made on the voyage. $620.50 was in gold and $209.50 in silver. Gold Spanish Doubloons is supposed to be worth $20. or $21. each in currency. [The Civil War was still going on, and paper currency was rapidly inflating.]”

“Telegraph you wife if you want Greenman to do the job, and write me whether the schooner has done as well as you expected after hearing of the poor run of fish we had, and what there was as poor as up river shad. My partners have played out with me but I keep it still for I can tell you better when I see you. I think by the time we get all of our little items settled up that the old schooner will make between $1,000. and $1,100. to herself if we could get a job for her this summer. With great respect I am as ever yours truly, John Eldredge.”

Greenman’s bill in November came to $4,685.00. Eldredge had been afraid they might find trouble when they took up the rails.

That spring of 1866 Gurdon took a flier in the petroleum business. Oil had been struck at Titusville, Pennsylvania in 1859. All we have is a receipt dated May 28. “Plumber & Allyn, Smith’s Ferry, Beaver County, Penn. Rec’d of G. S. Allyn $62.00 it being the full amount first assessed for 2/16 interest in oil well Meteor No. 2 Engine & tools as leased by Plumber & Allyn subject to 1/2 Royalty.” He did not get home much before the end of June. On the 19th he wrote from Muscatine “Dear Mother. Very bad weather on the river. Hope this finds you improved in health. Louis must go to school steady and Gurdie [aged six] I know will, but he says he cannot be a good boy all the time. I will run the balance to Clayton and if the present market is favorable shall wait until fall to sell. Love to the children and Yourself. G. S. Allyn.”

While at Muscatine he got a letter from Wightman, first the good news and then the bad news.

“Rec’d a letter from Price and McKnight wanting our next float at market rates. Lumber is going up below. Have just learned that a man was offered 22$ at the mouth of the Mississippi. We sold three strings of lumber 2x8 and other dimensions at 18$ at the mill to a man in
McGregor [Iowa just across from the mouth of the Wisconsin]. Price & McKnight want all the lath and shingles we can make. Arnold [from Rhode Island] says they have not got Hiles dam done yet, so we shall fail to get many logs from them. Mr. Hiles is disposed to give us trouble, wants his logs sawed at $5.00/M and hinted we might not get any. I told him we had made one contract and I should not make another but was ready to fulfil our part. Have since learned he has sent for a portable saw mill and intends putting it up at Germantown. At the present time he could do it for less money, but I hardly think he is in earnest as our damages would be more than he would want to pay and he would have to steal the logs out of the boom. He has been drunk for about a week and I guess has not known what he was about."

In October Wightman sent him $7,000.00, saying that made $19,000.00 sent East that fall. "Will have funds to pay all we owe. The next fleet ought to bring us $30,000.00 if we can get out with it, the river very low now and falling." That year Gurdon paid the Federal Income Tax of 5% on an income of $7,075.00.

A HOUSE ON THE HILL. When Gurdon was buying up the Packer land in 1866, he had already decided to build his own house with the nobs on the hill. His money was so new it crackled, but then so was that of Nathan G. Fish across the street, and that of the sea captains he had built houses for down Skipper Street a few years before. The last piece with the old Packer Tavern he bought in 1867 from grandson Philip B. Gray for $4,900.00, and had Gray tear it down for him. Many of the old beams and rafters were saved, and can still be seen in the attic with the original cut-in framing marks.

The new house was in the Italianate style, but with not so much gingerbread as the Capt. Stark house. The front porch was just wide enough for a row of rocking chairs. Bay windows were just coming in, so he had one on the back parlor. The Skipper Street houses had their kitchens in the basement, but it was probably Martha who insisted on having hers on the main floor. After all, they were not going to have a couple of Irish girls to do the running up and down stairs.

A matching stable was built in the back yard, raised on a stone foundation over the pigpen. The chicken coop was attached. There was an ample hayloft, where much later I did my first ardent but awkward "necking". Between the stable and the house was the two story carriage house with room on the second floor for storing the sleigh or carriage out of season. The three holer was finished off with lath and plaster, and given a coat of light blue kalsomine every few years. Fifty years later it would rub off like chalk dust on my best blue serge Sunday suit.

The crowning glory was a real bathroom with flush toilet at the back end of the long upper hall, one of the first in town. Leonard Mallory took the plumbing contract for $997.00. The china toilet bowl cost $3.75, but he made the wooden tin lined tank up on the wall, which was tripped by a long chain hanging down. He also made up the metal lined bathtub, faced with matched boarding and topped with a handsome walnut rim.
The new reservoir farther up the hill did not have enough head to carry water to the second floor, so a large tank was built in the attic to catch rainwater. Except in very cold weather, the three holer in the carriage house got the most use. Hot water had to be carried upstairs from the boiler at the back of the kitchen stove.

Material prices had skyrocketed from the time he built his first house on Water Street twenty-two years before. Inflation was “ruining” the country. Bricks had gone from $5.25 to $15.00/M, spruce framing from $10.00 to $25.00, surfaced boards from $25.00 to $55.00. The inside doors were now $4.00 each, from $1.00. All the material came from Cottrell’s, including a pair of wide sliding doors between the front and back parlors for $18.00, the same price as the double front doors. These were embellished with patterned ground glass panes for an extra $35.84. The total lumber bill came to $2,060.00.

In the summer of 1868 the family moved in. Gurdon was then fifty-two. As a mark of social acceptance, Colonel Packer across the street sent them a formal invitation to a 3:00 P.M. “at home.” Martha kept the invitation. Gurdon was elected First Selectman that year and again in 1874.

There were no more trips to Wisconsin. The Wightmans bought out his interest in the lumber business, and Gurdon bought out theirs in the fish works. With the profits from lumbering he put money into new boats. Even that was not enough for his expansion plans, so he sold half interest to Capt. John E. Williams, a retired family
connection from Ledyard. That same year he persuaded Capt. Jack to go in with him on a
stone quarry, located on the west side of Quiambaug Cove in Stonington. They cut into
the side of a high stone ledge so the stone would not have to be lifted out of a pit. In all
of his projects, Gurdon always avoided working against gravity. The quarry never paid
much. In 1870 they borrowed $3,000.00 from the Groton Savings Bank. Half was paid
off by April. The rest carried interest for years.

In December 1869 a letter came from a young niece Sarah Morgan at the Woman’s
Hospital, 49th Street and 4th Avenue, New York, “Dear Uncle Gurdon, It costs me $8.00
a week here plus washing. Sands was going to get my money out of the Norwich Bank. I
have no one. I wish you would write to me, others have family and friends to call. If you
come, bring my breakfast shawl in the closet out of the dining room. Elias says he will
come next summer and will take me back with him.” Sarah must have been staying with
the Allyn's when she was taken sick. She afterward married Capt. George Allen of
Ledyard, and lived in Preston to a ripe old age.

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 13. G. S. Allyn, Businessman. (Photograph by E. A. Scholfield, Mystic River, Connecticut.)

**GOING ALL OUT.** Among the papers for 1869 there is a booklet of interest rates
from George P. Bissell & Co. Hartford, Bankers and Government Securities. I do not
know if Gurdon ever bought any; there were none listed in the inventory of his estate.
Instead he invested in boats, the thing he knew best. There was a 1/32 interest in the
schooners G. B. Franklin, J. N. Colbey, E. P. Low, and a 1/16 in the schooner Kate
Church, used in porgy fishing by the Church family. He bought a 1/64 interest for
$1,353.95 in the ship Dauntless, built by Maxson & Fish. It was registered at the Custo
House, Stonington at 995.35 tons.
Over the next few years he bought in his own name the sloop *Cornelia A. Sounds* from Mathias Rowland of Norwalk, the sloop *Rambler* from James A. Hovey and Amos Prentice of Norwich, and the sloop *Annie* from George A. Vogel of Old Saybrook, recently built at Noank, J. G. Tryon, Master. These sloops, used by the business, were popularly called “smacks” but not listed as such. At the same time the company was buying the sloop *Condor* from the Luce Brothers of East Lyme, and the schooner *Milo* from Harmon N. Bell of South Norwalk. In 1871 *Gurdon* bought the schooner *Florence*, built in Hallowell, Maine in 1843. A 7/8 interest belonged to David D. Mallory and cost $3,000.00, making the total value $3,428.56. The next spring he bought the other 1/8 from William N. Latham for $300.00, which would make the total value $2,400.00. Latham probably needed the money at the time. These sloops and schooners frequently changed hands, *Gurdon* himself often holding them for only a few years.

In 1873 *Gurdon* bought back from Daniel Hill a 1/16 interest in the Fish Works for $500.00, making the total value $8,000.00. Like the boats, shares in the business often changed hands. The business was still growing. In 1872 alone they processed 142,000 gallons of oil and 4,080 tons of scrap. In spite of the money coming in, he borrowed $504.00 in 1873 from Luther Morgan, who held another note in 1874 for $2,256.00. The first note had only $150.00 paid on it by the end of the year, and the second one was not paid off until several years after *Gurdon’s* death. There were two new seines from the American Net & Twine Co. for $669.00 and $777.00, taken on four month notes. The continuously mounting debts did not stop him from buying the store building next to the Central Hall block from the estate of D. N. Prentice, who had sold him groceries and supplies for so many years.

*THE G. S. ALLYN.* The first steamers for porgy fishing were built in Maine about 1874. In 1875 *Gurdon* contracted with Mason C. Hill of Mystic to build one for the business. It was about 60 tons, of hard pine with white oak frames, and seems to have been the last commercial fishing steamer built in Mystic. He was never to see it in the water for the *G. S. Allyn* was not launched until after his death.

That winter *Gurdon* had stomach pains which gradually got worse. By the end of January he was bedridden with stomach cancer, and on February 25 he died at the age of fifty-nine. Only three days before his death he was prevailed upon to draw a will. It put the estate in the hands of his son *Louis*, then aged twenty-five, and his cousin Luther Morgan. It provided that the estate not be settled until his younger son Gurdon reached twenty-one, which would be in 1881. As it turned out, it was not until 1884 that things were straightened out. He asked only that they keep his new house, and the farm on Swantown Hill where his sister Sarah Allyn Bailey lived.

It is doubtful if he ever drew a balance sheet of his assets and liabilities. There is none among all his papers. The inventory of his own holdings came to $38,422.75, his 7/16 interest in the fish works $5,169.00, and a half interest in some of the other boats with Capt. Williams $3,050.00. After all the debts and Capt. Williams’ shares in the businesses were paid off, there were only the house and land on the hill valued at $11,000.00.
and $7,000.00 in the Central Hall. It did not provide much income for Martha to live on.

Since the building of the last commercial fishing boat in Mystic has never been recorded, this seems as good a place as any to note it down. Irving Allyn, a distant cousin, and his two boys Leonard twenty-three and Walter nineteen built in 1947 the 65 foot dragger *Vagabond* powered with a 265 H.P. Joshua-Hendey Diesel at George Payne’s marina at the foot of Fort Rachel. It was only one of several they built, including the 32 foot *Alba* in 1938 and the 57 foot *Mary A.* in 1942, named for his wife and their mother.

**LOUIS PACKER ALLYN**

*Louis Packer Allyn* [3], my grandfather, was born on July 22, 1851 in his father’s new house on Water Street. I remember him as a short stocky man, always ready for a roughhouse with his grandchildren, of whom I was the oldest. All the family went to Granddad’s for Christmas to make up for the many long years when his work kept him from home. My first recollection of him, when I was not more than three, was being bounced on his lap while he twisted his gold watch and chain in front of my face. He was a great one for kissing, but I never got used to his bristly walrus mustache. I can see him now giving his head a little jerk to hook his whiskers over the bar of his mustache cup. After the cup was broken and the ends of his whiskers became stained, my grandmother insisted that he cut them back to a short brush.

Death was always present when he was a child—the babies, sister Juliaett, and his mother when he was seven. After that came the lonely year with Aunt Gallup at the House Behind the Rock. One day when we were out for a ride, he pointed out the end of the stone wall where he would sit, watching for someone to go by on the road to the river. Even after his father remarried and *Louie* went home, his stepmother had her own new baby and his father was usually away on some business or other. It is little wonder that he grew up with little discipline, or education either. There were those in town who said he would never amount to much.

In after years when he had his own family and business, was First Selectman of Groton and State Representative and a pillar of the Baptist Church, he would sometimes tell me of the shenanigans that gave him his early reputation. One time in his late teens he went to a party outside of Old Mystic on a winter’s night. Several young couples brought their babies and left them well wrapped in the dark front room. During the evening, *Louie* and a friend swapped the babies’ blankets. When it came time to go, the parents each grabbed up their little bundles by candlelight and took off for home in their sleighs. Half the night was over before all the little darlings were located and returned to their proper homes.

The next time there was a party, the two boys were not invited. To take their revenge they climbed up on the roof and plugged the fireplace chimney, smoking everyone out of the house. Tipping over outhouses at Halloween was the common thing, but all the boys did that. How harmless it now seems, compared to today’s malicious mischief.
When Gurdon came home to stay in 1868, he realized that young Louie aged seventeen was growing up with little education. That fall he was sent to Bacon Academy in Colchester as a boarding student. After a few days of school discipline, Louie walked home and vowed he would do so again if he were sent back. Fortunately J. K. Bucklin had opened a school for young ladies and gentlemen in his large house on Jackson Avenue. The only good that came of it for Louie was his acquaintance with a bright eyed and pert thirteen year old Emily Maxson, who eight years later became his wife. After one term at the Mystic Valley Institute he went to work as a clerk in his cousin Luther Morgan's store. When he reached his twenty-first birthday in July 1872, his father gave him a gold watch and put him to work at the fish factory on Mason's Island.

After his father began to make money, Louie became a fancy dresser. He sported a silk hat in his early twenties, and even had a white silk topper the year they were the fad. His most serious problem was drinking. One night, feeling pretty high, he brought home the girl to whom he was engaged. Her father ended that romance on the spot. It was not until he was about forty that his mother-in-law, a founder of the Mystic W.C.T.U., got him to take the pledge. Knowing his reputation for complete honesty, it is safe to say that he never touched another drop for the rest of his life.

He did not start going with the little girl from Professor Bucklin's school until 1875 when he was twenty-four and she was twenty-one. They became acquainted all over again. They were married the next year, eight months after his father's death, and Lou lived to celebrate their sixty-second wedding anniversary. That spring and summer of 1876 Emily seems to have spent a good deal of time visiting her brother Arthur and his new wife Mary in Preston, as well as other relatives. Lou went up weekends when he could get away from the fish works. A letter of March 29 says he worked the last two days day and night. When he couldn't go to Preston he would spend the evening with the Maxsons at Old Field. They were the only real parents he ever had, and afterward he always called them Mother and Father.

In September, although they were to be married in October, Emily was in Preston and Norwich again, teasing Lou about the young men she met at church sociables. "Dear Lou, I am at Arthur's most of the time. Suppose you have been having a great many fish this week or else you would have written. Only next month, dear, but Mercy! Shall expect you Sunday Lou. I remain—what? Emily." They were married on October 24 and went to Philadelphia on their honeymoon. For the rest of their lives Emily had Lou dancing attendance, which he accepted with gruff good grace.

Emily Maxson Allyn. Emily Fenner Maxson was born March 20, 1855 at her father's house at Old Field. The only surviving daughter of her thirty-seven year old father, pampered and strong-willed, she always claimed the center of attention. After starting school she and Jennie Bradley and Ella Stillman formed a little girl's club, the Princesses of the Ruby Seal. Emily, of course, was Queen.

Like so many twelve year olds, she started a diary on January 1, 1867. The Seventh-Day people did not celebrate Christmas, considering it "Popish." The tree and presents
came on New Year's Eve. "I had a breakfast shawl from Uncle Gurdon [Hiscox], a Bible
from my Sabbath School teacher, a pair of mittens from Mother, a little angel from [ten
year old] Silas and a scarf from I don’t know who. I read a short history of the life of
Christ that I wrote myself." Other entries concern learning to cook and knit and wash.
One day she and Jennie Bradley, who usually sat at the same double school desk, went
to Mystic and bought a coconut. There were the usual excuses for not going to school—a
headache, sore teeth, etc. On June 14 she noted "I did not go to school this afternoon,
fell down and hurt my back. Rode up to Mystic to get me some ribbon."

She was not above getting gossip from her sixteen year old friend Evalyn Berry in
Potter Hill. "Lill Card works in the same room I do [at the mill] and if we don’t more
than raise Ned. There is just the boss and another girl in the room and just as soon as he
goes out then we have fun I tell you what." Another letter sounds like one of those
endless telephone conversations girls have today.

"Father is fast asleep its fun to watch his head he says he never nods
Mother is up stairs and Charlie is out in the kitchen with his feet stuck
on top of the cold stove trying to read I believe the cat is in his lap I
saw Mary Cate yesterday she was to school and if she want full of fun
well then she put a nail an old broken one down my back and it just
about killed me. Uncle Ed is going to have another kickup [revival
meeting] sometime soon. Last night I went down and stayed with
Lillie Card in the village. In the evening we went to meeting in the
Chapel. I have some new music O would I were a bird and Walking
down Broadway there was a Temperance meeting at the Lyceum
Charlie sung The Little brown jug Alfred Stillman tries hard enough to
go Mary Cates way but I expect Eugene has about broken her heart so
of course she dont care anything for Alfred nor no one else dont care
for him as I know of without its Sophia Staplin."

In 1872 when Emily was seventeen, Mother went to visit relatives in New York
State and wrote home “If you are too lonesome you can keep Charlie home and play
school with him and get Mame to stay with you. Your Father will help you take care of
the plants and get breakfast, he does for me. You will find some cake in that little room
in that trunk. I have just made some yeast, so you won’t be bothered about that. You had
better warm your room some tonight and take a hot brick."

Cousin Sara Stillman of Westerly wrote “Your hopes are quite groundless. Mr. A. A.
Stillman and I split quite a long time ago and he now plays the gaillard to Miss Lizzie
Langworthy of Ashaway. I am that unfortunate that I do not possess that charm about
me that most of my female friends possess and I expect my doom is sealed. Come down
and see a fellow as soon as you can. With ever and ever so much love I am as ever your
rattled headed cousin.” Sara wrote again in June “The Honorable George Babcock Taylor
Esquire allows I am not handsome enough for him. There is an old saying goes ‘There is a
Jack for every Gill, if one won’t another will.’ but it seems to fail in my case. Come down
when you have time. All you have to do is ‘pull the bobbin and the latch will fly up.’"
Another diary resumes on March 20, 1873. "My eighteenth birthday. I used to think when I should be eighteen I would be quite an old young lady. I expect to graduate from Mr. Bucklin's school in the summer term. Mr. Chas. P. Williams is paying my expenses. I have been reading History today concerning Lady Jane Grey and Bloody Mary. I have a composition to write on 'Attila at the gates of Rome,' and for examinations essays on Physiology and Moral Philosophy." Before vacation she had finished Greek. Family visits began to Preston and Norwich.

In April she was visiting Lizzie Ryley, sister of her brother Arthur's wife. Her fiancee Oscar Berry tried to arrange an introduction for Emily with his very shy friend Frank Smith. They finally met in front of the Wauregan Hotel, but nothing came of it. When she got home, Mother was papering a room and beginning to take in boarders. For her last term Emily was studying Latin, Composition, Botany, Rhetoric, Citizens Manual and Mental Philosophy. That Thursday she wrote in her diary:

"A busy life with plenty to do, but is it not too much for self. What shall I do to make it more useful for others? I want to help Mother and try to improve myself mostly intellectually I fear. Teaching I suppose will be my course but will I succeed when I do not have any desire or ambition for it except for money. 'The love of money is the root of all evil' but I like the things, books, pictures etc. (& dress I suppose) that money will buy. I am president of the Thugatralethean Society at school, and Henry Taylor of the Philomathean. I can scarcely realize that my school days are so nearly over."
Lou and Emily met some time in the winter of 1875. His father died the next February, and then there was the fishing season, so they were married on October 24. With their young friends the Daniel Denisons, who were married the same day, they took the train together to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Emily and Mary Denison remained fast friends for life. I can remember Grandma saying years later when Mary died “Now there is no one left to call me Emily.”

**MARRIED LIFE.** Emily went to housekeeping in her stepmother-in-law’s house on the hill, an arrangement that lasted for twenty years or so. Many times the young couple talked of a house of their own, but with Lou barely scratching out a living, there was no other way. They had to take care of Martha and brother Gurdie too. The Estate hired a procession of girls to help out, but they soon left to get married or get a job in a mill. For the next six years Lou worked all hours at the fish works on Masons Island, often spending the night there.

Their first child Louis Maxson Allyn was born on September 1, 1877. A year later Emily was visiting her brother Arthur in Bridgeport. She wrote home to Lou:

“Wish you would get my summer hat out of that square hat box and ask Bridget or your mother to rip off the velvet and there is some more in another round hat box, and send it in a paper to me by mail. Send that bird in that hat box too. I want to get my winter hat made while I am here. Use the box downstairs that had tulip bulbs in it or a square flat one in the press. If the box is not full put in some soft paper to keep the bird steady.”

Emily was pregnant with the next baby during the summer of 1879. Lou sent a note by hand from the fish works “Shall not be home until Saturday night unless the steamers are in. Let Fred go with you to the Opera if I am not up. Send me a clean shirt by Father Maxson.” Gurdon Spicer Allyn II [2] was born on December 9. They called him Jess and spelled it Ges. He was my father.

Granddad never did say much about those last few years of the G. S. Allyn & Co. business. For a while it carried along on its own momentum, but he was not the driver his father had been, and Captain Williams wanted to get his money out. Not until nearly the end of his career when he and Samuel S. Brown owned their own little fishing business at Harborton, Virginia did he regain the self-confidence he once had as the cocky young son of one of the town’s leading citizens. By 1882 they had sold off the rest of the boats and closed down. S. S. Brown of Mystic and James Lennen of Norwich bought the G. S. Allyn.

**A NEW JOB.** That winter they hired Lou to build a new fish factory for them at Lewes, Delaware about two miles east of town behind the new government breakwater. He wrote from there on February 8 “Dear Wife. I am waiting at the Post Office for an oyster stew. Rather a one horse town. We are talking of going south down at the Wilcox factory tomorrow. [The Wilcox family had a factory on Chincoteague Island as well as the one on Latimer Point.] Shall be home on Wednesday. The oysters are ready and the man is about to close.”

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A week later he was back at Lewes again. He little suspected that it would be many years before he lived in Mystic again, except for a few months in each slack season. They began work on the two story cook house where he and brother Gurd would live. “Went to the barber’s this morning and got shaved, afterward to the Methodist Church and enjoyed the sermon very much. No church of our denomination here, so expect to become a Methodist this summer. Dear Em I wish you were here with me. Tell Louie and Ges that Papa would like to see them very much, and you know I would you. Tell Louie [aged six] that he must be the man of the house now. Love love to my dear Wife.”

By March they had staked out the mill and commenced driving piles. Capt. Luce from East Lyme had the factory just north of them and told Lou he would be willing to help about everything. “Mr. Brown left me in full charge here and told me to use my own judgment. It is quite a change for me to get in with someone who is willing to trust my judgment. I mean to do the best I can and not abuse the trust. The Wilcoxes are coming down next week. Rowland is to be married on Chincoteague. I should like to be at home so we could go down home Sunday and have the good times with Father and Mother [Maxson] as we always do when we go there.”

The next week he wrote “Got your letter and ones from the boys. If they want to write with ink why don’t you let them and not make fun of them. I can almost see how they look the little Darlings. Dear Em I should like to see you Right Well. Right Well is a word they use here.” Em was always trying to correct Lou’s spelling. He wrote her “I suppose Farther would like Father better, and if I were going to call you sweaty you
would rather I said sweet, for I know you don't sweat much this weather especially when you are sleeping alone. I wish you would send me a dictionary and Gaskell's Compendium. I will speak to Brown about the money he was to give you. He has so much on his mind, but I intend to hold him to his agreement.” He was to be paid $2,000.00 for the year, however long the season lasted. They seldom got the monthly check when due.

“I guess by the tune of your letter you want me to give up going to church. I don't see any very good looking girls but if you think church is such a dangerous place I shall have to give it up. Darling I know you are good looking as well as myself and I should like to gaze on your beauty and press you to my breast. I should like to have seen you washing Jerry [the horse] and cleaning the stable. I think the horse and hens would have suffered if they had been watered by Luther. Does the old fool think you are not capable of taking care of things. I think it shows his 'good breading' leaving his old horse tird for you to clean up.

[Cousin Luther used the horse, which belonged to the estate.]

The April 19 letter said “I expected to come home the first of May, but the boilers and machinery will be here. It will not do for me to leave when I am most needed. I shall make the best of it this year but if I have to stay here ten months out of the twelve they will pay for it next year. I have got 22 men at work and the dock is out 800 feet.” On May 2 he asked Em to come down for two or three weeks. “You need not go to any great fixing up, for it is you I want to see not your cloes and we don't care what other people think as long as we are happy. I have been thinking how we used to go up to our room Sunday afternoon. You Dear Girl I wish you were here now.”

Em came down and left the boys with Mother Max, who wrote before dinner “Here come the two ‘workmen’ all in the blue waggon, Ges with a dirty face and his hands full of dandelions. When Father came up to the barn he found the calf hitched in the stall with a string of bells around his neck. He told Louie to take it off and Louie said Grandpa had better take it off, he had trouble enough to get it on.” Louie spent more and more time downtown. Grandma Max thought he needed his parents. Four year old Ges was still wearing petticoats, or kilts as they were called for boys. Before Em came home Grandma made him some short pants and Uncle Gurd cut off his long golden ringlets. When they met Em at the West Mystic station she didn't recognize her little boy.

Lou was getting disgusted with the business by July. “The fish are coming in and we are not ready and no men and the Old Harry to pay. As it is I would not take three words from anyone before I would pack up and come home. I have worked the last three Sunday mornings pumping up the boilers. I told the Captains it was the last Sunday I should do it. The men leave here faster than I can hire them.” Em had her own troubles with stepmother Martha. She and Lou let off steam to each other. Lou wrote her “Sorry that you have to suffer so much, but I don't want you to write about I might have done better perhaps to have married some other woman. You know that I love you and if we were single and know as much about each other as we do now I should marry you and no other. You are a good true woman that loves me and tries to make a man of me. God
bless you and be good to you.”

That summer of 1883 Lou received a dispatch saying the Masons Island factory had burned. He wrote Em “It was very strange that Capt. Williams was awakened the night of the fire. If I was in his place I should say very little about it. I hope they have no trouble getting the money from the insurance companies. If we get the insurance in full, it will leave us in good shape.”

In spite of Brown’s telling Lou he would get home in October, he was still in Lewes for Thanksgiving, and Christmas too. There was all the dried scrap to bag and sell, and the business was $800.00 in the hole. They offered him only $1,000.00 for the next year. Now that the mill was built, Brown must have figured he could cut Lou’s pay 50%. There was no chance of a job around Mystic. Em made a Christmas for the boys. Santa brought Ges a drum, slate, monkey on wheels, block puzzle, an orange, candy and nuts. Uncle Gurd gave Louie rubber boots. Grandpa Max was fixing up an apartment in the attic. The first tenant was John MacDonald, a carpenter newly arrived from Prince Edward Island.

Lou came home in January and went back April 6 at the $1,000.00 pay. The “Old Maids” brought suit to close down the factory on account of the smell, but the jury was divided and the case was put over until fall. “Brown seems hard up. Morgan and Wilcox have attached the S. S. Brown.” Lou’s pay almost stopped. The horse was sold to Brown’s Livery and Russell Welles bought the carriage and harness for $83.00. Em had to loan her father $40.00 to pay his taxes.

That summer the G. S. Allyn Estate was finally settled. There was enough insurance money from the Masons Island fire to pay up Capt. Williams, but Luther had to borrow
$500.00 to clean up the other bills. Down at the fish works Capt. Lennen seemed on the edge of a nervous breakdown. He did not even go to Lewes to spend the night with his wife, who was staying at the Rodney House. *Lou* told him “If my wife was here I would stay all night if it took the best cow in the barn.” Lennen had a fight with Capt. Spicer, who was going to throw him overboard, but let him go when Lennen cried. *Lou* wrote a letter of resignation to Capt. Brown, which was not accepted. Afterward he told of the time Lennen was caught in a bad storm off the cape. He knelt on the deck and made all sorts of promises to be a better man. When the steamer finally made it behind the breakwater Lennen grumbled “There, what a damn fool I made of myself.”

Back at home *Em* was having her own troubles. She sold the cow for $25.00, and Annie, another girl, went to work in Naugatuck at the rubber factory. “I don’t know how I will manage. I cant be on my feet much even to bring in coal and wood and water. I have so much pain in my side now. The children fight like cats and dogs, but you never saw such fine lads as ours. Such smart little bantam cocks.” Gurd was often away fishing, and there was no one else to help.

In the spring of 1885 *Em* was pregnant again after *Lou’s* early stay at home. “I do not think any burden you put upon me is from the Lord but somebody besides you has got to give me a spirit to bear them, but I have a great deal to be thankful for and you are decent enough in some ways. You can have a kiss if you want it—O my dear husband, good night, *Em.*” In June she wrote “The boys brought me a great bunch of blue flowers. Your old plaid pants have been washed and a rather domineering young man [Louie] wears them around. To be sure they are turned inside out and changed in shape, so they look very good to strut around in.” *Lou* wrote at the same time “I want to be good to you and am ashamed of my actions when I am home and hope you will forgive me.”

In July five of Martha’s relatives came from Lyme and stayed. They sat around and ate and did nothing to help. *Em* was exhausted, but wrote *Lou* “I think what made me so miserable was your continually taking the risk in spite of all I could say. From your still loving wife Emily. I wish I could see you dear you old darling even if we quarrel.” Martha spent her time in bed or sitting in a chair, asking *Em* to give her squibs or massage her arms, with regular nips from the bottle of brandy.

*Em* wrote to *Lou* that same month “I asked Ges why he would not come when I wanted him. He said ‘What shall I say when I don’t want to?’ I have been making him a blue suit with a kilt skirt and sailor blouse for school this fall. [He was six.] Louie says dresses wont do but kilt skirts and shirt waists will. I sold some chickens for $3.12.1 I could have sold $10. worth if I could have caught them.”

*Lou* wanted to come home for a visit in the fall when the baby came, but did not dare for fear the engineer might get his job. “They are only offering $800. for the next year. Fishing is so poor they are thinking of chartering a factory on Long Island.” Two weeks before the baby came another Champion came for a visit. She and Martha sat on the front porch and regaled *Em* with stories of sickness and death in childbirth. *Lou* wrote “Don’t know how you keep your spirits up with all the Champions. Tell Mother Maxson she will get her reward in Heaven. God Bless her. She is our Mother and thank God for it.”
Ges made out all right at school. The Gallup boys drove him and George Alexander off a stone seat they claimed. "I said to Louie what did Ges do. He said ‘Why he went back again. He don’t drive very easy.’ Some boys have been smoking and drunk at school, and one boy had his pehole out in school playing with it. Ges let out what Louie and Laura Packer were doing in the barn under Laura’s instructions. Lou said they said the word in school." Louie had just turned eight.

The baby was born without complications on September 28. They named him William Ellery after his grandfather, who wrote Lou “Emily is fine. The boy is a cleaner. The Democrats carried Groton. Stonington voted license. [Local liquor sales.] I think rum and democracy will have full run in New London. Let them do it.” Gurd had married Mary “Mame” Bailey that summer and went to live with the Bailey’s on Skipper Street. When the baby came Em insisted that he would have to take his mother Martha to live with them. The case for closing the fish factories outside of Lewes came up again. Lou appeared for Luce as well as Brown and Lennen. “Beat them clean out of their boots.” About fifty bullets were fired on the G. S. Allyn fishing off the beach.

Two years later Martha complained that the money she got from Central Hall building wasn’t enough to pay her $3. a month board at the Bailey’s. Em told her she could come back, or would loan her the money. Em warned Lou not to tell Gurd, who was working in Lewes again, the reason Mother A. was visiting.

Louie’s tenth birthday was September 21. “I made a fancy cake and cup cakes and he asked Georgie Alexander and Frankie Evans home to tea. I set the table pretty with silver and fruit and had frosted baked apples and cut up peaches and grapes and pears and all the cake they wanted and gave Lou and Ges a liver pill before they went to bed. I had told him I would ask Maggie and Emmie Wilbur and Laura Packer, but he said they didn’t want any girls.” When winter came and the boys went into shoes and stockings, Em wrote that Louie’s shoes could not be tapped again. One Sunday there were not enough stockings for both boys, so just Ges went to Sabbath School.

Em and some of her friends, Annie Greenman, Helen Wilbur and Mary Abbey Champlin, organized a Chatauqua Club, which afterward became the Monday Club. A few years later she organized the Garden Club, and was president of both for more years than her family thought proper.

By 1887 brother Charlie Maxson was promoted to a good job on the Morgan Line sailing out of New Orleans to New York with stops at Key West, Tampa and Havana. The next year he wrote home that he was going to marry a New Orleans girl, Emma Rathke, whose father had been a ship carpenter in Danzig. Her mother was Mary Connors, a Catholic. The Seventh-Day Baptists had always insisted on tolerance of all denominations, but now Em’s faith was really put to the test. After thinking it over for several weeks, she wrote this letter.

“You told me you were going to marry a Catholic girl. You know very well what we would naturally think of it. I can truly say any regrets we have is not on account of outside opinion but on account of fears for your welfare. I have no doubt the girl you propose to marry is a very
nice girl. Although she is a Catholic she may be a good Christian. It 
would be her prejudices that stand in the way for we would worship 
with anyone that believed in the same God, but I know that Catholics 
are taught that everyone outside of their church are heretics. It seems to 
me a Catholic might be a Catholic from accident of birth and still have 
the liberty of conscience to do as they thought right in spite of the 
dogmas of a church creed or of a priest. At any rate her father is a 
Protestant. But whatever the case may be you must remember the old 
adage 'Keep your eyes open before marriage and half shut afterward.'"

For the rest of her life Aunt Emma was the most beloved member of the family.

By August of 1888 Brown and Lennen had chartered a fish factory at Promised 
Land on Long Island out toward Montauk Point. Lou was put in charge although his 
yearly salary was still $800. Em said she could see Montauk Light from the house, so he 
didn’t seem so far away. That month there were the usual great crowds at Peace Meeting 
on the high hill on the west bank of the Mystic River. Mrs. Parnell, mother of the Irish 
patriot, was there. Em wrote “I gave Ges 144¢, all I had. I thought the fare was 5¢ but it 
was 10¢. He did not have enough for a cold drink, so drank out of the salty river. They 
usually have water which they sell cheap, but were all out. I suppose the Quakers didn’t 
care, so people would be compelled to buy lemonade. He came home lips and chin 
trembling trying not to cry. He followed Herbert [Maxson] around who was with a girl, 
and said Herbert was awful mad at him. I went and made Ges some lemonade.”

Lou sent home some honey. Ges said “There is two kinds of honey isn’t there. 
There is bees honey and the kind Papa calls you.” Em added “he will probably want some 
of that kind himself some time.” In the fall she told Lou he had better take the $800. they 
offered him.

Father Maxson died in 1895. Louie was now eighteen and Ges sixteen. They bought 
a twenty-seven foot catboat Laclabell from Jim Davis in Noank. It was a “sand-bagger,” 
that is, it had a wide beam and centerboard with a huge gaff-rigged mainsail. Every time 
the boat came about each passenger threw a canvas bag filled with sand over to the 
windward side and brought another over with him. The boys spent their summers taking 
out charter parties. Mystic was already becoming a tourist resort and most families stayed 
for the summer.

THE TIDE TURNS. By 1896 the fish business was doing well enough for Lou to 
get more money. They bought a brand new buggy, and a horse from J. E. F. Brown for 
$75.00. That September S. S. Brown died of Bright’s Disease. Capt. Lennen was easier to 
get along with now that business was better, and he went on a second honeymoon with 
his wife to Niagara Falls. That winter they were approached by N. B. Church, a bony 
fisher from Tiverton, Rhode Island, about selling the business for stock in a new “fish 
trust” which was buying up all the businesses they could from Maine to Texas. The 
letterhead was very impressive—American Fisheries Co. 135 Front Street, New York. The 
Hon. Chas. J. Canda, President; Rt. Hon. The Lord Lurgan, Vice President, 16 St. Helen’s
Place, London. Church was to be Manager, but most of the money was English. Lou and Lennen became stockholders and Lou was put in charge of the factories at Lewes, Tiverton, Promised Land and Long Pond, Maine. The next August they declared a 7% dividend. Ben Burrows, who ran the coal business in Mystic, told Lou "Quite good if they earned it." In their naiveté Lou and Lennen signed an agreement not to go into any other fish business for twenty years.

Meanwhile Lou was exhilarated at being a director of a big corporation. "We are meeting here at the Astor House. The big five. Just like President McKinley and his cabinet." Lennen was leery of the whole deal, and sold out. He wrote "Now Lou I want you to hear me as I am the oldest and have had a good deal of experience. Take care of yourself and you do the head work. The worst part of my selling out it hurt me being away from you as I have always enjoyed your company and could depend on you always. Write everything down because i dont want to trust Church." Lou realized they were counting on his good reputation, and they knew he was uneasy, so their lawyer William Findley Brown wrote him from New York "Impress on people in Lewes that the business will be conducted upon a larger scale than before, but with much less odor. There is to be no syndicate or monopoly but simply the operation of a legitimate business under Letters Patent of the United States which is done every day throughout the length and breadth of the land. Say that you expect to be in charge yourself and will conduct the business as before satisfactory to the people." A typical lawyer's letter of the time, which only increased Lou's uneasiness, and proved to be a pack of lies.

In July of 1897 Louie was admitted to Lehigh to study Engineering. Ges went to Bulkeley School in New London that fall and got high marks. By now he was much bigger than Louie, and played football on the Bulkeley and Y.M.C.A. teams. He was tall and strong like his mother and the Maxsons, while Louie was short and stocky like the Allyns.

With Lou's new position and the prospects of big money Em went on a buying spree. She bought a black iron lamp for the newel post with a beautiful yellow globe with gold dragons set in the glass. From LaClede Woodmansee of Westerly, husband of her cousin Jessie Hiscox, she bought a complete set of Haviland China. The whole set cost $39.00, most of which we use today. She also ordered a china cabinet with bent glass for $20.00. There were new dresses for her and a new suit for Lou. She kept on with her heavy housework, however. For the spring cleaning in March she had taken up all the carpets in the house, scrubbed the woodwork, put down new linoleum and varnished it. Lou had been salting away every cent he could while working for Brown and Lennen. He had $5,000 in seven Connecticut savings banks, and put it into stock in the new company.

On February 15, 1898 the battleship Maine blew up in Havana harbor. William R. Hearst had got his Spanish-American War. The east coast became hysterical. People were still thinking of the Spanish Armada. Ges in his last year at Bulkeley wrote his father in May after the Battle of Manila Bay "Dewey didn't do a thing to the Spaniards, did he? Big time here last night. The young around town are getting up a company and will offer their services to the Governor." There was no standing army of any size. Em wondered if it were safe for her to go to Lewes. Ges had been admitted to Pennsylvania Medical
School by letter, but his mother thought he ought to have a year of college first. They decided on Colgate College, a good Baptist school. She took him down to Mr. Button, the tailor, to see about clothes. "He thinks a gray diagonal black made with a cutaway coat the best and asks $22.00. McKendrick [the other tailor] says gray too common now and thinks a rough serge the best for him, $16.00." Newbury put steam heat in the house. The bill was $427.05 with $408.00 for the cast iron furnace. The radiators were extra.

In August Church told Lou to run the factory at Lewes Sundays if there were still fish to unload. Lou wrote him "You thinks it makes a profit for the company. I think there is more profit in the long run without it. You will be making a mistake and it conflicts with public opinion and the State laws. I will do anything I can conscientiously do as General Manager, but I cannot work on Sundays." Mainly it was against his religious principles. The thing dragged on until the following March, when he quit. Two boys in college and no job. Em wrote Ges "This thing is making me sick. We have got some money saved up, but don't want to use it unnecessarily. Probably your father will get something after a while. People have confidence in him you know." She had been using every argument she could think of all winter, but to no avail.

**ANOTHER JOB.** On July 1st he started work in North Lubec, Maine for the Standard Sardine Company, an independent business. They were just setting up a new factory, and put Lou in charge of the installations. The American Fisheries Company went through bankruptcy, squeezing out Lou and some of the other stockholders. They reorganized right away as the American Fish and Oil Company. As Divine Retribution, they lost fifteen steamers in an autumn storm. Lou does not say how much if anything he got out of the business.

Elias Lofland, one of the engineers at Lewes, kept in touch with him. "Miss you more than my brother. Have not learned their treatment for cooking gurry. They keep it a secret but I will have it. They have paid no money in two months and the men have struck. Write but dont say anthing. They all think I tell you everything." The next spring he sent Lou the formula for taking the water out of the gurry before it was pressed. Lou's father had been working on his own acid process years before at Masons Island. Other old friends in Lewes wrote too. M. H. Roach said he was now running a steam laundry and had named their new baby Emily Allyn Roach.

Em wanted to come down to North Lubec but there was no place to stay. Lou was sleeping in the office. He told her to get the cost to put in electric light, which had just come to Mystic. Ernest Packer gave her a price of $90.00 for the job, fixtures extra. Lou was being paid $166.66 a month, so he told her to go ahead. His hands had become badly infected from handling the fish. Col. Packer sent word that he should eat willow charcoal every day.

**PARTNERSHIP.** In January 1900 Capt. Lennen was sounding out Lou about going into the fish business with him, but was concerned about the agreement both of them had signed with American Fisheries. His lawyer told him the agreement probably would not
hold under the new reorganized company, but the new company threatened to sue Lou for working for American Sardine. Em was afraid they would attach the house. Lou engaged Hadlai Hull, a young lawyer from North Stonington who told him they had enough troubles without going after him.

Lou came home for a few days in April to take Em back with him. He had written “It is terribly lonesome here. I wonder some times if it is worth it to live as we are for the boys. I am almost fifty years old and think we ought to live together more. I will keep it up until they get through school. Darling, I wish you were here.”

By August Lennen was ready to start his own business in Harborton, Virginia on the Eastern Shore if Lou would go in with him. He had been busy lining up steamers. “Mr. Franklin wants $15,000.00 for the DKP and $12,000.00 for the Daisy. She was built two years ago and cost $10,500.00. The Martin crowd paid $9,000.00 for her at the Marshall’s sale. I shall depend on you to go in with me and you can depend on me too. We can help each other and make a go of it.” By September 10 they were in business.

The syndicate lawyers Hobbs and Gifford wrote to Hull “Shall we bring suit or is there some way to settle without going into litigation.” According to Lennen “Hull snorted and said what was their compromise. I think they want some money. My lawyer told me to go ahead and fish.” He gave James Tull of Pokomoke City an order to build a new steamer. “He and Mr. Codd are good people to deal with. Martin wanted to buy the factory. He thought I was sick and would sell cheap. It is worth $15,000.00 I guess.” Lou finished out the year with Standard Sardine and said he would be home for Christmas. “I hope the boys will remember the home gatherings at Christmas. I don’t remember having a Christmas when I was a boy. Mother [stepmother Martha] was always sick and Father did not do such things.”

Lou went to Pokomoke City the first of the year to oversee the building of the steamer. She was launched April 14 and christened H. A. Lennen with a bottle of water. He wrote home “She will make a dandy. Still getting letters from some of my old men at Lewes. Many want to come back bad. Don’t have money for you and Mother to come down this spring. Have patience.” The business prospered from the start. The boys came down to Harborton the next Christmas, and Em was there all during the fishing season staying at the Bonniwells, a delightful family; some of whom are still living at the Point. Lou and Ges graduated from Medical School in 1903, and Ellery started in at Penn.

In the fall of 1904 Grandma wrote Em “I was some surprised about what you told me about financial affairs and Ellie coming home. It has no doubt been a grief to you and Lou. I wonder what came over Capt. Lennen that he must be paid up. How can Lou do it?” Ellie went to work for Cousin George Fenner at the Babcock Printing Press Manufacturing Co. and stayed there until 1912 when he was stricken with tuberculosis. He went to Meechams in the Adirondacks, the only chance for a cure at the time. There he married Marguerite (Daisy) Almy, daughter of Dr. Leonard Almy of Norwich. The family always said that Daisy saved his life. That same year Louie set up as a doctor in Mystic. Four years later he married Laura Greenman, daughter of George Henry Greenman of Greenmanville. They had two girls, Lucia and Emily, who afterward became
my wife. Louie himself came down with TB in 1911. He went south with Uncle Charlie Maxson and then to Maine with Laura. He had a relapse again in 1913 and brother Ges took over his practice until he recovered.

At the same time Ellie and Daisy took a house in Harborton. In one of her usual witty letters she wrote Em “That peerless fowl of ours lays eggs behind the wood house. I race with Scott’s puppy to get the egg. The chickens increase in beauty and grace.”

In April of 1917 the United States had entered the Great War. In September the government bought the Lennen and Swan for use as mine sweepers in the North Sea, being wood hulled and non-magnetic. The Brown went in 1918 and the business closed out. Lou and Em came home for good. He was sixty-seven and she sixty-three. Like his father before him he was elected to public office, Selectman in 1920 and 1922, and State Representative in 1925 and 1927.

As long as they were able they went to Daytona every year, after Christmas with their children and grandchildren at the house on the hill. It is there I remember them best, happy and carefree. It was not until I read all these letters that I learned of their earlier trials and hardships. Granddad died in 1938 at the age of eighty-seven, firmly convinced that he would meet all his loved ones in the Happy Hereafter. Grandma died in 1943 at the same age, bedridden but surrounded by her books and always ready for a discussion on any subject; although grumbling everyday to her family that no one ever came to see her. The house was sold after she died. Each boy was left about $25,000.00 from the two estates after bequests to the Baptist Church and brother Gurd.

**THE SCOTTISH SIDE OF THE FAMILY**

Mother’s family all came from Scotland. Since most of them: the Hislops, Browns, Burns’s and Garvies, were short and dark, they probably were descended from the ancient Picts. The members of the family with red curly hair no doubt came from the Norsemen who settled in Scotland in the pre-Christian era. Mother was neither of these, but a “fair, bonny lass” with gray-blue eyes, soft wavy dark hair and a skin just dusted with freckles.

**HISLOP.** The Hislops lived in the lowland valleys around Edinburgh. They were small farmers, shopkeepers and gardeners, and always called their “betters” sir or madam. Mother’s family lived in Peeblesshire. Her great-grandfather Hislop married Jean Balfour [5], whose sister Margaret Isabella was the mother of Robert Louis Stevenson. Mother was named Annie Balfour Hislop because they were proud of the connection.

John Hislop [4] married Janet Shiels, a relative of Tibbie Shiels who ran the famous little inn at the head of St. Mary’s Loch in Selkirk after her husband died leaving her with five small children. The Hislops lived in Peebles in a small stone row house in the old part of town. Son James [3] was born there in 1847, followed by two more boys. Daughter Jessie was born in Glasgow. Brother Andrew stayed on at home and became a gardener at Traquair House, southeast of Peebles, home of the last of the royal Stuarts. He later
became head gardener and lived with his wife Helen in one of the two gate houses at the entrance to the estate. Both brothers made violins, a craft they may have learned from their father. John later made small furniture and fancy canes. He died in Bradford, Ontario where he lived with his second wife after Janet died.
James Hislop [3], my grandfather, came to Hartford, Connecticut in 1868 when he was twenty-one, and got a job in Brown & Thompson department store. They were also Scots and found places for the young ones when they came over. During the next five years he saved enough to bring over his father, mother, Jessie and brothers Jack and Will. In 1874 Jimmie married Annie Marion Brown [3], one of the boss’s family. Shortly afterward they moved down to Norwich, where he went to work for John Porteous and Archibald Mitchell, still other Scots. Jimmie was soon a partner, and opened a branch store of Hislop, Porteous and Mitchell in New London.

Figure 20. Annie M. Brown Hislop. (Photograph by Giles Bishop, New London, Connecticut.)

BROWN. Annie’s grandparents lived in Penicuik, Midlothian, south of Edinburgh, where their son Thomas Muir Brown [4] was born before coming to Hartford. After a short time at the Brown & Thompson store he went to work at the N.Y.N.H. & H.R.R. shop as a mechanic, afterward becoming foreman. In 1852 he married Janet Burns Garvie [4]. They had several girls and boys, and Annie Marion was born in 1852. We always called her Nanna.

GARVIE. James Garvie [5] lived on a farm at Upper Strathie, Auchterarder, southwest of Perth and married Annie Graham [5]. I don’t know his father’s name, but his mother was the daughter of Gilbert Burns [7].

The Garvies took a leading part in the Free Movement of the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Like the earlier Baptists in Rhode Island, they demanded “freedom of conscience” and the right to pick their own ministers. In 1838 the Garvies joined the secession, called the “Disruption”, which in 1843 became the Free Church of Scotland.

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Janet Burns Garvie [4] was born on the farm in 1824 and named for her great-grandmother Burns. After coming to Hartford when she was only twenty, she was active in organizing the First Presbyterian Church there. Brought up in a dissenting household, she was always outspoken, and according to the testimonial after she died "Saw through..."
pretense. There was no indirection or finesse about her.” Eight years after coming to Hartford she married Thomas M. Brown and became the mother of eight children, including Annie Marion. She died in Jackson, Michigan where she made her home with son Gilbert, at the age of eighty-two. The only story I have of Grandma Brown was when she was visiting daughter Annie in New London. Nosy as ever, she was going through a cupboard and found a small box on a top shelf. She called out “Annie, what’s in this wee box?” This was followed by a loud scream when she opened a “jack-in-the-box.”

BURNS. William Burness or Burns [8] lived on his farm two miles from Ayr on the Firth of Clyde, where he died in 1784. One son was Robert Burns, the revered Scottish poet. The other was Gilbert Burns [7] who married Janet. Their daughter’s name is unknown to me, but she married a Garvie and became the mother of James Garvie [5].

JIMMIE HISLOP. Unlike Gurdon Allyn, who was also engaged in several businesses, my grandfather Jimmie Hislop left no letters or records whatsoever. I assume Nanna Hislop destroyed everything before she died. All I have to go on is the inventory of his estate, and various newspaper articles.

Their first child Tommie was born in Norwich after they came down from Hartford, but died several years later of diphtheria in New London. They were living in a house on Church Street, now gone, where Annie Balfour was born in 1880. She was followed by brothers Graham Shiels and Gordon Irving. Graham was to marry Frances Peckham.

By 1887 Hislop, Porteous & Mitchell had stores in Norwich, New London, Auburn, New York, run by brother William, and in Grand Rapids, Michigan, apparently run by a Brown brother-in-law. It was not long before Jimmie bought out all but the Norwich store, and opened others in Stamford, run by brother Jack, and in South Norwalk and Westerly. All the Scots knew about Andrew Carnegie and the fortune he was making. If Carnegie could do it, Jimmie thought he might do it too.

In 1892 he and Gov. Thomas Waller formed the Post Hill Improvement Co. and bought a large tract of farmland running from Williams Street out to the Waterford line. Jimmie built a large imposing house at the corner of Williams and Vauxhall, and they laid out new streets up over Post Hill down to Ledyard Street beyond, where he saved out a farm of several acres. It immediately became the most desirable residential area in town, and many fine houses were built.

OCEAN BEACH. That same year the company bought for $42,000.00 the sandy point at the very south end of town, which became Ocean Beach. They built Neptune Avenue, and Bentley Avenue which ran down the length of the beach property. The next year they sold the bathhouse area and the beach itself to the City for $20,000.00. Sand dunes, running eight to ten feet high, were leveled off between Bentley Avenue and Alewife Cove. The Cove was dredged out to form Happy Day Island. Narrow lots were laid out on both sides of the Avenue, selling for $350.00 on the beach and $500.00 on the Cove. Twenty-two cottages were built the first year. Some cost as much as $1,000.00.
Figure 23. Vauxhall and Williams Streets.
The New London Horse Railway Co. bought a strip of land down Bentley Avenue with a turnaround at the end. A. H. Wilkinson built a pavilion at the upper end, which later became Wordell’s. Water was run in that year, electricity in 1897, sewers in 1903 and gas in 1910. Bentley Avenue was turned over to the City, but Waller kept Neptune Avenue private and built a big cobblestone house. Everything in the beach area was destroyed in the 1938 hurricane, and it is now a city park.

**VISIT TO THE OLD COUNTRY.** By 1895 the money was rolling in. There was no Income Tax. It was time for a trip back home to “the other side” as they called it. Annie was fifteen and Graham a few years younger. The first stop was Traquair to see Uncle Andrew and Aunt Helen who were living in the east lodge. Uncle Andrew gave them a badly cracked Spode footbath, supposedly used by Bonnie Prince Charlie, which Lady Elizabeth Stuart gave him. A pair of silver sugar tongs came from Tibbie Shiels, who received them from Lord Napier who had befriended her when she ran the inn at St. Mary’s Loch. There was a Minton pitcher from old Betty Tate in Peebles. She must have been something of a pest when she was young, for Grandpa Hislop said one time when he was a boy she knocked at the door and his father shouted out “We’nt in Betty.” In 1901 there was another trip, this time with a large family group. Grandpa spent over 200 Pounds on gold watches, pins, rings and other jewelry. One time when a guide was going on at length before some equestrian statue, Uncle Joe Garvie, a chip off the old block and bored with the whole thing, distinguished himself by shouting out “Look out or he’ll piss on ye.”

There was always Nanna Hislop Brown’s family to look out for. Aunt Jean’s husband John Hield, a tall handsome man, was provided with a floorwalker’s job in the store. Harry Brown was set up as a real estate salesman, but when he took a deposit on the wrong house, he ended up as a remittance man along with some of his brothers. When I was a boy, Nanna Hislop was still sending monthly checks to Michigan.

By 1906 Jimmie was getting in over his head and the strain was beginning to tell. He lost between $7,000.00 and $8,000.00 on two of his stores. Besides $60,000.00 in notes from banks, there were others from brother Will for $10,000.00, Waller for $8,000.00 and William Ziegler for $23,000.00, as well as a $13,300.00 mortgage on the house. Tom Waller told him he ought to take a vacation and suggested Bermuda, but they went to Nova Scotia.

At the end of March 1908 at the age of sixty-one, Jimmie Hislop died of a heart attack. He had rented his store buildings, but stock and accounts receivable came to $310,570.00. With $48,100.00 in life insurance, and other assets, the total came to $501,055.00. Notes payable and mortgages were $156,775.00, leaving a balance of $344,280.00. Graham was in his last year at Yale. He and his Uncle Jack Hislop tried to carry on the business but neither had the drive of Jimmie. Over the next twenty years with the greater use of automobiles, small town department stores became less and less profitable.

Right away they sold out the Westerly store at a big loss. The other stores went too,
with Uncle Will taking the one in Auburn. By the spring of 1929 they were forced to sell the New London store to a chain, and the house on Vauxhall Street went. The only one who might be said to have profited from the business careers of Grandpa Hislop and Great-grandfather Allyn was myself. I resolved early in my own career never to bite off more than I could chew.

Figure 24. Little Annie Hislop, 1880-1953. (Photograph by Giles Bishop, New London, Connecticut.)

ANNIE BALFOUR HISLOP. Mother was popular with the girls and boys her own age, but always unassuming. There was nothing in her nature to suggest people with money as I came to know them, although she was brought up with everything of the best. There was lots of “help”—a cook and a housemaid, a coachman who afterward became chauffeur for one Cadillac touring car after another, a gardener who had charge of the greenhouse and the extensive flower beds. She was not taught to cook or keep house, but had singing and dancing lessons, china painting and water coloring, fine sewing and all the other pursuits of a young lady of a family of “means.”

When she was ten she belonged to the “Owls Club” with seven other little girls—Bessie Boss, Kittie Brown, her cousin Annie Hield, Constance Morgan, Edith Newcomb, Gertrude Palmer and Alice Stanton. They had meetings and picnics and charity “fairs” and all the other things little girls do.

A few years later with the Hislop cottage at Ocean Beach, they became the nucleus of a large group of young people. By then she was going to the new girls’ high school Williams Memorial Institute. A long poem by one of the gang, Herbert R. Smith, described her as interested in yachts (her family had none), fast horses (her father had an interest in
the race track at Poquonnoc), fencing, Yale games (with some of the boys in town) and
the “Boston Dip” (a popular dance step). She also loved to swim and skate, activities she
kept up until late in life. Before she graduated in 1898 she was elected head of student
government, which I later found amusing. A less politically minded person it is hard to
imagine.

That fall she went to Smith College, but came home after three months from
homesickness. She was very much a mother and father girl. There were lots of parties and
dances, but always with the gang. There was no particular boy. It wasn’t until a dance at
the Crocker House in the winter of 1905 that she met and fell in love for the first time
with young Dr. G. S. Allyn. She was then twenty-four. Her mother was extremely upset,
and did all she could to break it up. She had raised her daughter to marry someone with
money and social position.

GURDON SPICER ALLYN II

Ges graduated from Bulkeley School in 1893 and planned to go to Colgate in the
fall. That summer he visited his father at Lewes and on July 14 started on a bicycle trip
down the peninsular, stopping at Chincoteague to see the Wilcox’s. By the time he
reached Old Point Comfort he was out of money, and both tires were punctured with
thorns. Finding a bicycle shop he borrowed 50¢ for dinner and supper and $1.00 for a room, putting up his watch as security. After wiring back for money, he left for Newport News where there was a large troop ship just in with the wounded from Santiago, Cuba.

“Am awful sight. Some old gray headed fellows and one negro who was quite jolly although wounded in the leg. They were boarded on flat trolley cars to take them to the hospital tents. One fellow was shot in the lung. You ought to see how tenderly three or four soldiers would pick up a man with a broken leg and set him down in a chair. One fellow had his arm cut off way up to the body. A fellow was brought off on a stretcher and when nearly in front of me the men stopped and the doctor looked at the man, and then taking a dirty blanket from under his head took off his own fine coat and put in in place of the blanket. They then took a blanket and put it over him and covered his face for they thought him dead. When the cars went up the street the people tried to cheer but it ended up miserably enough and most of the people were crying.”

A year later he saw the victory parade for Adm. Dewey in New York where people, who had never seen the dead and dying, cheered the “heroes.”

Twenty-five dollars came by wire the next morning. “First time I had to hock anything and I hope it will be the last. Much obliged for the money and hope your kindness will be exceeded only by your generosity if you have another chance.”

For the rest of the summer he and Louie took charter parties out in the Nylla. He spent his spare time with “Daught” Eldredge, a summer girl from Brooklyn whose family had moved there from Mystic to make money in the Fulton Fish Market.

Ges was sick in the fall, so did not go to Colgate until January. He found a place to board for $3.00 a week. There was a young man there from Persia named Mooshey and two “theologues” from Delaware. “Mooshey is a fine fellow and can see a joke quicker than a Delawarian ever thought of.” Mother wrote “Brush your teeth and say your prayers.” In February he wrote his father that he was watching basketball practice one day when the Captain asked him if he could play. “I said certainly [never having seen the game before] so he put me in center. I had to wait until the other fellow took his place to know where to go but I got along first rate.” A few days later he got a letter from Arthur Lamb back in Mystic. “Emmeline, Allen Lamb and myself spent the night at Carrie Noble’s, and did we paint the house RED. About two days afterward Edna Burrows, her Pa and Aunt Lizzie and the whole shooting match found it out, and by Gad. Ever a Jackass. Art.” The two Lamb boys, Edgar Rathbun and Ges palled around with Carrie, Edna, Elsie Lathrop and “Daught.”

Both Louie and Ges were admitted to Penn. Medical School in the spring, and left for Philadelphia October 1st. They boarded with Professor Swan from Newport who also gave them extra tutoring. They both went out for class crew, which bothered their father who had just started his new job at North Lubec. “Don’t forget what you boys are there for. $2.00 a week for spending money I think is too much.” The boys explained that they
went nowhere from Sunday night to Saturday night, and had to pay for laundry, lunches, books, etc. and Ges needed a new derby. In November "Daught" sent Ges a fancy pillow and told him he ought to learn to dance. "There is certainly nothing wrong with it as you think." The old Seventh-Day rules were hard to shake. Mother told him to get a new overcoat at Strawbridge and Clothiers. "Get it big enough for when you grow, with "paddock" shoulders, nothing extreme." He was already over six feet tall and weighed more than 180 pounds.

By the end of March he was rowing on the Varsity Crew, the only Freshman eating at the training table. They lost to Annapolis, but he thought the cadets were a fine lot of fellows. Then they beat Cornell and Columbia on the Schuykill. Harvard did not show up. He found there were many perks for crew members, free box seats for the Mask & Wig show and other events, usher jobs for athletic events. He was elected to the Houston and other clubs. The next month they won the Poughkeepsie Regatta.

That summer the boys kept busy with their sailing parties. Mrs. Clara Buckley, a summer visitor, organized a sewing party for all the girls and women who had been treated to sails. Each one made a flag for the boat with their names embroidered on. We still use the flags today. There were: Mrs. Clara Buckley, Mrs. Annie Buckley, Mrs. S. H. Buckley, Caroline, Estelle and Helen Beebe, Edna Burrows, Mrs. Emily Allyn, Mrs. Helen and Malvina Eldredge, Louise Haley, Lucy Latham, Emily Noyes, Maud Quentin and Emeline Wilbur. The young men included: Ralph Buckley, James Harrington, Harry Latham, Arthur Lamb, Charles Holmes and young Ellery. They sailed around the Sound in a heavy breeze with all flags flying, and were cheered by the New York Yacht Club making a rendezvous in West Harbor at Fishers Island.

Ges had broken his arm playing football the year before at Colgate, unknown to his parents. That fall at Penn he rowed with the Class Crew and practiced with the Varsity. He went out for football too. He and Louie were always hard up. Their father made it a practice to send them money enough for a week to insure a letter home. Ges was elected to the Student Council for Francis Hopkinton House, and with 125 other boys formed the Yankee Club for the students from New England. In November he needed $2. or $3. to hire a dress suit for the crew banquet. "I am a hot wad in a dress suit, even with a court plaster across my nose from football practice. Louie says I look like the Wild Man of Borneo, with that and two black eyes. Tell Ellie to only bet to win on the Cornell game. I though we had a cinch on the Harvard game, which only goes to prove, never bet on a sure thing." He often called on the Frank Buckleys in Germantown, and met some nice girls when they went to the York Road Country Club.

Arrangements were made for the Penn Crew to take part in the Henley Regatta in England. On April 3 they sailed on the Weisland from Philadelphia. From Liverpool there was a special train to Henley with two flat cars for the shell. They stayed at the "Five Horse Shoes" at Remenham Hill. Invitations flooded in, including a breakfast with the Lord Mayor and Council. They didn't win the cup, but rowed against the Leander Club, Thames Rowing Club, London Rowing Club, New College, Oxford and a crew from Ghent. Then they had a wonderful time in Ireland rowing against the University of
Dublin on Lake Killarney. They thought the Irish were the best. Back in London there was a banquet by the American Society, luncheon with the Archdeacon, and another banquet by Colonel Hunniker at his “elegant” place on the Thames.

Figure 26. G. S. Allyn, Captain Penn Crew. (Photograph by Fritz and Dean, Philadelphia.)

Before the boys left for home Ges was elected Captain. Since most of the crew were Seniors, there might not have been much choice. He and the Gardiner brothers then took off on a trip around England on bicycles furnished by a London firm. Each thought the other had money, which was not the case, so they ended up often sleeping in haystacks and took milk from cows in the morning. Their fame had preceded them, however, so they were sometimes asked to stay at one of the “Stately Homes.”

That fall he was taken up by girls in the old Philadelphia families. Miss Rittenhouse even loaned him a horse and smart rig. Unfortunately he was indiscreet enough to take another girl out for a drive one Sunday afternoon and passed Miss Rittenhouse in her own vehicle. That was the end of that arrangement. He was often asked for his photograph, and it amused him to give the girls his full length picture in his rowing togs, which were quite as revealing as a ballet dancer’s tights. His mother was his greatest confidant, and she often visited Philadelphia on her way to and from Harborton. She told me that one time when walking across the Campus with Ges a young fellow spoke to him but he did not reply. Em said “You didn’t speak to that young man.” Ges replied “O, he’s just a Freshman.” In those days the Captain of the Crew was the highest of the Campus Gods. Like other campus heroes before and since, fame and glory came to him too young.

INTERNING. In February 1903 both boys were taking exams for the Board of Medical Examiners. “I talked to Professor Lamberton about getting into a hospital. He says the exams count for little, they want a man of good appearance, good character,
good standing, and has a medical degree. Does Pa know anyone in New York of influence, political, financial, or is connected with running or with donations of a hospital?” On March 19 he was sick abed with a temperature of 103°. He had been exposed to smallpox, scarlet fever and diphtheria at the Municipal Hospital. Louie was up all night giving him medicine every half hour. On April 9 he wrote “Working on Gov. Pennypacker, whom we met through the Stackhouses. Senator Brandigee of New London said he would help, but he didn’t. Am trying for St. Mary’s here.” Mother answered “Sorry you did not get the Providence Hospital, but perhaps a smaller one would be better. Pa’s eyes are bothering him, and he is very short of cash.” On May 1st she sent him $4. to go to Lancaster to see about a hospital. “Ben Burrows said he thought he could have helped you about a hospital in Hartford, but it is too late now. He is on the Legislative Committee for Humane Societies. How about New Haven?”

On June 12 the Penn crew won the Poughkeepsie Regatta again. The same day Ges learned that he had got a place at St. Joseph’s in Lancaster, and Louie got a place at St. Joseph’s in Reading. Mother came for the graduation on June 17 and went to the garden party at the Stackhouse country place. Pa was so busy he could not come. He was afraid he did not have the proper clothes anyway. He never did see Ges row.

On July 12 Ges wrote his mother from Lancaster. “Lots of emergency operations. The whole place first class. The Sisters take care of all my things. Most of the patients speak Dutch, some no English.” In the fall Em was a patient there for two months. She had been having weak spells, probably nervous exhaustion from getting the boys through school, and Lou being out of work. She made a big hit with the Sisters, and often did sewing for them. The next spring she got a letter from Sister Mary Lucy, the Mother Superior. “Thank you for your invitation to visit you, I can’t say just now. The Sisters were so surprised you remembered us so well by name. Sister Fidelis said ‘Sure you must have had the book Lives of the Saints in hand because the names were nearly all spelled correctly.’ They all return their love. I am complying with your wish in remembering you in my prayers.” Ges passed the Connecticut Board exams the end of September 1904.

DR. GURDON S. ALLYN. That fall Ges took rooms in the new annex of the Crocker House in New London where he lived and had his office. He had to borrow money to get started from Cousin George P. Fenner. The first thing he did was to buy a lot of new clothes appropriate to his new profession. Perkins “Fine Clothes for Fine Fellows” made him a cutaway coat and striped pants and a Prince Albert topcoat, finished off with a silk top hat. The hat looks shabby today, but the clothes are almost like new. For evening wear there was not only the tuxedo, but a tail coat for “white tie” affairs. He had taken Daught Eldredge’s advice and learned how to dance, and attended the Wednesday night dances at the hotel, then the social center of New London. Ellery lived with him and worked at Babcock’s for George Fenner.

One evening in February he met Annie Hislop, and it was love at first sight for both of them. He invited her to go with him the following week. Her first of many letters was dated February 20, 1905. “My dear Dr. Allyn. You must not be offended, but I really do
not think I ought to accept your kind offer for Wednesday night should [brother] Graham and his friends fail to come. I truly appreciate your goodness. Most sincerely, Annie Balfour Hislop.” He was twenty-five and she was twenty-four. The romance bloomed throughout the summer, and in September he called on her parents to tell them they wanted to become engaged. All Hell broke loose. They didn’t want their daughter to marry one of those Allyns from Mystic, who had neither money nor social position.

The next letter was dated September 29.

“My Dear Dr. Allyn. You must be surprised to receive a letter from me so soon. I did not think it would be like the letter I must write now. My heart is sorely pained and I feel more deeply grieved than ever before in my life. My poor father was very much exercised last night. This morning he and Mother gave me a severe talking to. Now if I loved you as I ought I would suffer this and more, but as it is, I cannot give
them so much displeasure. Your little pin I shall not send but will return to you sometime when I see you again. Perhaps it will be best if you do not come to see me anymore. Do just as you choose about that. I want you to feel that you always have a true friend in me, and will ever think the best of me. Most Sincerely.’

Anne was sent off to visit her Uncle Jack Hislop and his family in Stamford where he ran a branch store. As Louie said about Ges years before when he was pushed off the rock in the school yard “Why he went back again. He don’t drive very easy.” He went down to Stamford and persuaded Anne to stand up to her parents. On October 12 she wrote him “Father came down. I have been trying to get up my courage to tell him. Thank goodness he took it beautifully. Mother will know tonight. Try and see them Sunday and please do not wear your heart on your sleeve. I feel greatly relieved I can tell you.”

It turned out that Mother was the problem, not Father. Three days later Ges wrote:

“My Dear. I have just been to see your Father, but did not see your Mother. He took me into the parlor and talked to me for half an hour. I sat there like a dolt and hardly said a word. He said your Mother was very strongly opposed. He asked me about my trip [to Stamford]. I said I went there against your wishes. He wanted to know how long it had been going on. I told him nothing until the night you went away. He said he wanted to be sure you would live as you always have, and that I was a young fellow just starting in. I told him I had nothing except my practice. What else could I say. I said we did not think of getting married for two or three years. I said it was not my place to speak of my character and reputation. I have always been proud of my family, but said nothing. When I told my Mother this afternoon she was very much broken up and cried, for I had always called her my best girl, but if I was sure of my own mind, she wished I would be happy and kissed me. She said she did not know you at all well, or who your family were. What will we do Anne, only God knows. It is a misfortune to be poor, but I have work enough for my brother Ellery and myself. I have the best of blood in my family for hundreds of years and have high hopes of my prospects. My folks have spent a great deal of money on us boys. That is all there is to me Anne, except that I love you as I think a person loves but once, and such as there is I am all yours. I have always said that it was a blessing not to be born rich, for the rich miss so much of the real enjoyment of life.”

Anne answered immediately. “Father and Mother are sick. If I have done wrong I pray God forgive me. They know your character and reputation to be the best, but they just dislike you, and for no consideration would they consent to our marriage and not for anything in the world would I go against their wishes. I shall go to Aunt Jessie’s and stay as long as I can.” Aunt Jessie was her mother’s younger sister who was married to Welton
Harris and lived in Yonkers. Anne stayed for six weeks and saw two of her mother's closest friends. Mrs. John Morris lived at the corner of Fifth Avenue and West 18th Street with her husband who had made a small fortune with the Royal Baking Powder Co. "Madame" Jennings Demorest had also made a fortune selling dress patterns and promoted Braille printing for the blind. Her husband ran for President on the No Fushion Ticket. They were all very much in favor of the marriage. At the end of November Anne wrote "Mother and Father are still very bitter, but you have scored with Mother because you are going about your business like a gentleman. I told them I would marry you sometime. Of course they think you are not good enough for me. They think you are a very ignorant sort of person." Just before Christmas she wrote "Mother would kill me with kindness, but of course it isn't kindness I want."

Beginning with the dances at the Crocker House, Ges had embarked on a busy social life. In April he joined the Thames Club, and in the summer the Nameaug Boat Club which had a place in east New London below the railroad bridge. His romance with Anne being still a secret, there were lots of invitations from the other girls in town. Minnie Chappell invited him to dinner. He played whist with Sue Boss, daughter of the Cracker King, Anne Belden and Alice Stanton whose father was the leading doctor in town and had given Ges lots of help and advice. Then there was whist at Taylor Armstrong's, dinner at the Henry Adams's, Guy Arms, Bob and Coe Gardiner, hunting at Lantern Hill with the Prentis's and Lawrence "Brud" Chappell. These invitations must have given the Hislops second thoughts. He faithfully paid party calls after each invitation.

The next February he wrote Anne "Just been down on the street with my friend the Mayor [Bryan F. Mahan] and picked out a place for my sign. Am working on my paper for the Medical Society which I entertain Thursday evening with a literary and gastronomic feast. Cliff Belden brought me a pipe from Genoa. They are as good a companion as a dog and much less trouble. Business is double last year, but I am considerable in the hole yet." In March he was appointed Pathologist at the Memorial Hospital with the privilege of treating private patients, and was put on the staff and the Executive Committee. There was lots of jockeying for various medical appointments. "Dr. Cronin was in before supper to talk over a puzzling case, so don't you worry but what he is all right. He and Dr. Sullivan just left after helping me dispose of some good tobacco and firewood."

In the spring of 1906 Ges had it out with the Hislops. He told them they could agree to an engagement and plan a proper wedding the following spring or he would take Anne down to the City Hall to be married. They gave in, but insisted that nothing be said for some time. Cousin Annie Hield "Coz" wrote Anne "I was so proud of the way you stood up for your rights when you had the final tussle. Bully for you!" In August Anne visited the William Zieglers at their huge summer "cottage" at Great Island, Noroton. They too were great friends of her mother, and were strong for the marriage. Today no one in the family seems to know how Nanna Hislop became acquainted with these millionaires.

Ges wrote Anne there "I was invited to dinner at Lucy Haley's in Mystic. They have
a pianola and fine cigars.” The Haleys had made money in the Fulton Fish Market and built a fine house on Reynolds Hill. A while later he wrote:

“Cliff and I went to Mystic and took a couple of girls to a local play. They were old friends of mine, yet there was something or other that made them seem like my men friends. The more I see of my old friends the more I realize what an aimless sort of life I was drifting into before I met you. Not but I still like my old friends but I can see that it was always myself that came first. You will probably find me thoughtless at times Anne, but it will be because I have lived for myself alone so long. Your Father probably saw the way I was headed and he has undoubtedly brought me around. In fact he rather overdid the thing, so much so that it now seems odd to be decently treated by people who have nothing to gain. Julia Caulkins told me half a dozen calls I owe. Mrs. J. P. Armstrong has cut me off her list. Of course I am broken hearted! I came near letting business go for society but have changed my tactics. If there is any money in this thing I am going to get some. Dr. Cronin asked me to look after his practice tomorrow. Glad to have him show his good will. B. F. Mahan joined Cliff and me for an hour after supper.”

The wedding date was set about Christmas 1906. The next February Father and Mother and Anne went to New York on a shopping spree. “I almost wept at our dining room set. Father will have to plunk out $325.” Mrs. Ziegler picked out a handsome carpet and Mme. Demorest a beautiful silver tea service. Years later when Nanna Hislop finally realized it was plated she was greatly put out, assuming of course it must be solid silver. Ges said “Thank God, we won't have to put it in the bank every time we go away.” Father bought a full set of Limoges china, which is still our best. “The brass bed will certainly hold us. It is a stunner. Mother suggested I buy you a necktie to wear at the wedding. She nearly paralyzes Coz things are so very different. We will be so happy soon.”

There is a clipping from the Westerly Sun dated April 4. “Dr. Gurdon Spicer Allyn and Miss Annie Balfour Hislop, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Hislop, owners of the Westerly store, were quietly married yesterday at her home by the Rev. J. Romeyn Danforth of the First Church of Christ (Congregational). The marriage of the Episcopal Church was read. About 100 guests attended.” They moved into the house Ges had bought at 33 Broad Street, New London, on another note by George Fenner.

**AT HOME 33 BROAD STREET.** They were happy at last. G. S., as Anne always called him, was busy at the hospital and with calls and office hours, but there was always time for parties and dances which they both loved. Ellery moved in with them, but being younger, had his own social life. Grandpa Hislop died the next year of a heart attack, and I was born soon after on June 2, 1908. Della Moran, a handsome dark-haired girl newly arrived from Ireland, came to help with the baby and housework. She was full of fun and almost like one of the family. I still remember her musical voice.
In October G. S. was appointed City Physician by the Council. In December he had an attack of typhoid fever from which he did not recuperate. With all the strains of the past three years he was on the verge of a breakdown. He went to see his cousin Kirt Stillman, who had an office on East 27th Street, New York. He and Dr. Stanton both recommended a sea voyage. Fortunately Uncle Charlie Maxson, captain of the Comus, was about to sail for New Orleans. G. S. went right aboard, and sailed on December 29, his birthday. He left word with Anne to refer his patients to Dr. Chipman, and send his dress clothes in a steamer trunk. He told her to pay Fenner $250. on his note, which left $80. in the bank.

In New Orleans he took a three day trip up the Mississippi on a riverboat. He had an attack of cramps, but “the bartender fixed me up with his No. 6, Jamaica ginger in straight whiskey.” In January he went to stay at a tourist boarding house near the Gulf at Biloxi, Mississippi, where he played bridge and croquet and went sailing in a small catboat. Anne wrote February 1st “Mother wants to know if you need any money. She asks after you every day, but I know she would like to hear from you direct. I have enough money if I don’t pay the bills.”

By April he was home again and on the job. Being the youngest doctor at the hospital, he was on duty the day of the Yale-Harvard boat races in June. Mr. Preston, who married Grover Cleveland’s widow, was brought in with a badly crushed hip from being jammed by a launch against one of the great steam yachts in the harbor. G. S. did such a good job on him that he sent a check for $2,000. This was in the days when a call was $3. and a normal home delivery $20. G. S. bought a Maxwell runabout, one of the first autos in town. By the summer of 1910 Anne was pregnant again. They wanted the children to be brought up in the country, and began looking around for a place within easy driving distance of town.

**JORDAN VILLAGE.** In December 1910 G. S. bought the old Powers place on Jordan Brook north of the Rope Ferry Road. It was a large stone house, badly run down, which had been built, so we were told, by Philip Powers over several years. He had cut the stone in Graniteville and brought in down the hill in a one horse cart. In the rear there were the hayfields, now grown up to scrub, and land across the brook in back of the village. Altogether there were about 12 acres. A bank mortgage for $2,600. helped buy the property. Gurdon, Jr. was born on February 17, 1911. It took a year to put the house in shape with the help of two more mortgages, and they moved in on December 18.

On September 9 the Joseph Lawrence Free Public Hospital, newly established, signed on G. S. and nine other doctors for the staff. Even then, however, he had other ideas besides doctoring. Mayor Mahan, who was a road contractor, had told him about the need for a good supply of gravel. The land across the brook filled the bill. That winter to join the property to the main road through the house lot, G. S. had men cut alder brush to lay on the ice for a footing. This was built up with gravel to make a causeway with a little bridge across the channel. In the spring of 1912 he bought a solid tire Atterbury truck and was in business. Nelson Faulkner was hired to operate a gasoline engine belt
loader, and later a screening plant. Although only four at the time, I raced around watching all the exciting goings-on. A new Corbin touring car replaced the Maxwell.

In May 1913 he bought another truck, a new Mack. The Atterbury had been working often from 4:00 A.M. to midnight, with G. S. often on the job. At the end of the month he resigned from the hospital staff. It was several years before he got out of doctoring. He finally just quit sending people bills. I asked Mother one time why he gave up his profession. She said he was disgusted with all the politics that went on in the hospital, but looking at his later career I felt that he much preferred working outside as his own boss. That summer Anne wrote to Granddad in Harborton that they had $7,000 in orders, and in one week cleared $200. “There is more money in it than pills.”

When the family moved to Jordan we all started going to the Baptist Church, and Mother sang in the choir. We had always gone to Nanna Hislop’s for Sunday dinner after Grandpa died, and kept it up for years. We went there for Thanksgiving too, and to the Allyns in Mystic for Christmas. With five other couples, Nathan and Ruth Belcher, Clifford and Julia Belden, Alec and Elizabeth Campbell, Philip and Charlotte Hankey, and Horace and Frances Learned, they began going off on a picnic on Memorial Day; an outing they kept up for over twenty years. The children were included too, as they came along.

MASONS ISLAND COMPANY. Old Andrew Mason died on Masons Island in the spring of 1912, leaving the southeast part of the Island and part interest in some other sections. After his estate was settled, G. S. and Ellery bought the property for $13,155.00 and incorporated the Masons Island Company on September 5, 1913. There were 75 shares of common stock at $100. a share. Each bought 35 shares, and Kirt Stillman 5 shares. A mortgage of $6,500. covered the balance. The Island’s early days are told about in Major John Mason’s Great Island.

NEW LONDON SAND AND STONE COMPANY. Two months later the sand business was incorporated as The New London Sand and Stone Company. G. S. held 186 shares of Common Stock, Nanna Hislop 8 shares, Grandma Maxson 3, Daisy Allyn 2, and Uncle Gordon Hislop one. Of the 17 shares of Preferred stock, Nanna Hislop bought 10 shares, Mother one, and Philip Hankey, his lawyer, one. There was a mortgage of $1,450. for new equipment. At the end of December 1914 the company bought 16 acres at Massapeag in Montville on the Thames River from Frank and Ida Rogers for $100. an acre. They were paid $1,100. in cash and 5 shares of Preferred Stock. Another $850. mortgage went into equipment. Interest at that time was 5%. The Central Vermont tracks ran along the shore, so there was access to shipping by either rail or water. At the end of the year the balance sheet showed:
ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan property</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaker Hill</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massapeag</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atterbury truck</td>
<td>2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mack truck</td>
<td>3,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>3,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bills receivable</td>
<td>2,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
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Total Assets: 25,515.

LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferred stock</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common stock</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bills payable</td>
<td>2,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due stockholders</td>
<td>1,057</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Liabilities: 25,515.

The summer of 1915 the Jordan bank was busier than ever. In July the business paid a semi-annual dividend of 3½% on the Preferred and 2% on the Common. By the end of the year the government and private business had already started on war work, although it would be a year and a half before we entered the European war. G. S. decided to put up an up-to-date screening, washing and loading plant over a siding on the Central Vermont tracks. A $6,500. mortgage on the Jordan property paid for the installation, and by March 1916 construction was started. G. S. left home at 5:00 A.M. every day but Sunday for the next three months. It was almost ready to go by July, except some of the machinery had not come, so he made a trip to Ohio to speed things up.

The first carload was shipped out on August 16. Contracts had been signed for material for the piers for the new Thames River railroad bridge, the Sub Base, the Groton Iron Works, and later Fort Michie on Plum Island, New York. Two barges were leased for the season at $200. a month each. One bitter cold night in November with a heavy wind blowing down the river, the tug skipper did not show up. With a time contract to meet and no one to give him a hand, G. S. took the tow down the river himself with the tug Venture he had bought. A cross wind took the barge to one side of a railroad bridge pier and the tug was swept down on the other. When the tide finally changed he got the tug around and made it down the river on schedule.

POLITICS. The summer before G. S. had decided to get into local politics, and in October was elected First Selectman over Democrat Albert Lamphere, who had held the post for seventeen years. The Republicans put Democrat Charles A. Gallup on their ticket for Town Clerk and H. W. Manwaring for Tax Collector. They were both incumbents of some standing. What really helped the Republican victory though was that G. S. spent a lot of time in the north end of town, long neglected by the party in power, and successfully worked for a new school at Quaker Hill. Several years later when Al Lamphere died, I made a flippant teenaged remark about him to my father. He brought me up short by telling me “Don’t you ever talk like that. Al Lamphere was one of my best friends.”
The summer of 1916 Anne found herself in the role of farmer's wife. It seemed as if G. S. had been stocking up for Noah's Ark. There were: two cows, calves as they came along, two pigs, a plow horse, chickens, ducks, geese and even pheasants in a long brush-filled run, but they were just to look at. He had planted five kinds of apple trees, pears, quinces, sour cherries for pie, an asparagus bed, hazel nut bushes, and even Egyptian papyrus which flourished on the edge of the pond. There were two beehives, but the bees often swarmed in the Russett apple tree, so G. S. had to rig himself up with heavy gloves and a net over his hat to get them, using an insufflator.

Fred Williams, the local pigsticker, took care of the stock part time. One night when he brought in the milk he announced that there were some new baby pigs. Mother asked if he had names for them. With a typical Yankee smirk he said he thought he would call one Annie. Whether it was intended as a compliment or a joke, Mother put the "kibosh" on that idea. She sold the extra chickens, eggs and milk. I can remember the next year when we were in the war she apologized to the customers for having to raise the price of milk from 5¢ to 8¢ a quart.

She had never learned to cook before she was married, but took to it with skill and enthusiasm. She made scrapple and head cheese when a pig was killed, ran the kerosene-fired incubator for the day old chicks which were bought in the spring, and canned everything in sight. The vegetable garden had about everything in the catalog. One of my jobs was to keep the soil up around the celery as it grew so that the stalks would be nice and white. In the fall the carrots were put in a pile of sand in the cool room in the cellar, along with crocks of eggs in waterglass. Apples and potatoes were stored there too. The smoked hams and bacon were hung in the cold pantry. The parsnips were left in the ground to freeze and ripen. Della had stayed behind in New London where she had a "steady," so with all the extra work they hired the first of a series of girls from the State Farm for Women at Niantic. The part-time help by Nan Brennan was no longer enough.

Only a real emergency kept Daddy from spending Sundays with his family. On nice afternoons there would be a drive in the Corbin to the Devil's Hop Yard, Masons Island or Deans Mill where the Water Company provided stone tables and benches for picnicking. Saturday night, if there was not a party or dance at the Crocker House or the new Mohican Hotel roof garden, the folks went to a movie at the Crown Theater or a play at the Lyceum.

That November to the amazement of all, the German submarine Deutschland came into New London harbor with a cargo of dyes. The United States still being a neutral, its officers were entertained by the City Fathers at a banquet at the Mohican. Daddy brought me home tiny German and American flags which he said had decorated his submarine shaped ice cream mold. If they were trying to build up good will, they blew it a few days later when they tried to sneak out under cover of darkness and rammed and sank a T. A. Scott Co. tug, drowning one of its crew. The sub had to put back for repairs.

On April 1, 1917 the United States entered the Great War in Europe. G. S., still Selectman, was going great guns at Massapeag. We boys
were nine and six. A month later he volunteered for the Naval Reserve as Lieut. JG, Assistant Surgeon. On account of his government work he was not called up until later. Ellery had already joined the Army as an Ordnance Captain, and he and Daisy moved to Baltimore where he was supervisor of inspection. Even Kirt, a life-long hypochondriac, got a commission in the Army. No one was more surprised than himself when he passed the physical exam. Uncle Gordon had joined the British Navy some time before as Medical Officer. He was torpedoed and rescued in the mid-Atlantic taking American supplies across from Canada, still a British Dominion. On a quick stopover in New York he married Dorothy Hall, daughter of the Joseph Halls of Norwich.

![Figure 28. Annie Allyn, War Picture.](image)

That November G. S. was appointed Health Officer for Waterford, but on January 1st he was transferred to the Regular Navy and assigned to the Receiving Barracks at Newport, R. I. He and Anne made a trip to New York where he got a uniform, overcoat and insignia from Brooks Bros. for $155.50. Grandma Allyn paid $24.75 for his belt and sword. He needed somebody to run the plant. Mother wrote to the grandparents at Harborton

"We have a fine man, Jerome House, to take charge at Massapeag. Richards has joined the service. Bill Bowker will handle the office work. Sand is still going out to the Sub Base and the Irons Works. G. S. makes a fine looking officer but I had rather see him in his overalls and old hat. I am proud of him of course but to me there is no glory in war. He said he would never feel satisfied with himself if he didn’t have a part and wouldn’t want his boys to say ‘Why didn’t Daddy go?’ Awfully

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good of you to lend us a hand when we need it.”
The next letter says “House called to say he has an offer of $40. a week from some plant in Delaware. G. S. will pay him $100. a month the year round and 3¢ a yard commission. It means everything to have a competent reliable man. Enclosed are two notes for you to sign.”

By summer some of the other JG’s were promoted so G. S. inquired about himself. He was asked if he belonged to the Masons or Knights of Columbus. Taking the hint he joined Brainard Lodge of Masons in New London on July 2. On September 21 his promotion came through. In August he had turned in the Ford coupe for a new fast Jeffery 6 touring car. Some nights when he got off duty at Newport he would rush back to Jordan for several hours. Coming down the road into the village he would open the exhaust cut-out. The roar would wake Mother and us boys, and presumably most of the neighbors.

In October he was assigned to the Tjikenbang, a Japan-China-Java Line ship lying in New York and bound for Norfolk to be converted to a troop ship. The Captain greeted him with a scowl and said he supposed G. S. was like all the other doctors about following strict orders and wouldn’t let the ship sail until all the toilets were working. They sailed immediately. Quick repairs were made in Norfolk, and with a load of troops they arrived in Bordeaux on November 14, three days after the Armistice. The next March he was assigned to the Sub Base Hospital until he retired on November 20.

**CIVILIAN LIFE.** By the end of 1918 the sand and gravel business had finished with its government contracts, so G. S. looked for State road contracts. Although his sand had passed all Federal tests, it could not get approved by the State. Afterward he found that the State Inspector was in the pay of a large sand and gravel firm in New Haven. The Groton Iron Works fell farther and farther behind on their payments. That March they owed $4,000. and as soon as the war stopped they quickly went into bankruptcy, owing him about $12,000. He finally got about 50%. At the time of the last suit in 1921, he wrote his father “If they hang C. M. Morse and his sons this time, it will be no more than they deserve.” The Income Tax Return for that year showed G. S. got $2,600. Navy pay, Sand and Stone Company salary $1,800. and its bonus $1,078. He should have taken the bonus as dividends, which unlike the bonus were not taxed! Interest and property taxes came to $347. There was no tax on Navy pay, so with a $3,000. deduction he paid no Income Tax anyway.

At the end of 1919 there was a Balance Sheet for the Sand and Gravel Co.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>Accts. Payable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,900.</td>
<td>5,536.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant</td>
<td>Notes Payable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,969.</td>
<td>10,450.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto</td>
<td>Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500.</td>
<td>21,700.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat</td>
<td>Undivided profits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,050.</td>
<td>5,408.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109.</td>
<td>42,894.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accts. Receivable</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,329.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,938.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty Bonds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42,894.
In April 1923 the business was sold to J. E. Fitzgerald, a New London contractor, for $10,000.00. He paid $1,000. in cash. The rest of the payments were to be made out of profits; but the post-war depression had set in and there were no profits, so the sale fell through. Taxes remained unpaid for two years.

In 1920 a large two story hall in Jordan belonging to the Ancient Order of United Workmen came up for sale, so G. S. and nine other men bought it for a firehouse. The Waterford Fire Company was organized with him as first foreman. Their engine was a Model A Ford, gaily painted and rigged for a ladder truck. Being a private company, it contracted with the town to be paid $25. a call. That first year there was a brush fire regularly every other Sunday when the weather was good. One Sunday someone rang the alarm on the wrong day, catching the firemen in their best Sunday clothes. By 1930 they could buy the building, and by 1936 build a new brick firehouse.

G. S. got back into politics once more as chairman of the Republican Town Committee, and in 1922 was elected State Representative with a seat on the Appropriations Committee. Two years later, having put too much trust in one of his party backers, who secretly worked for his own nomination, G. S. discovered too late what was going on and did not get the nomination.

**REAL ESTATE.** The post-war depression hit real estate like everything else. There were few sales on the Island during the middle 1920's. He took out another mortgage to live on. In 1922 Herbert Stoops, one of the artists who had been living in a little shack on Money Point, bought the site of the original Mason House and built a new stone house. Shortly afterward he said to G. S. “Doc, we’ve got just enough people on the Island now. Let’s leave it just as it is.” Pop replied “Herb, if I could afford it you wouldn’t be here.” To this day newcomers still give me the same story. I always tell them the land is for sale if they want to buy it.

Two or three years later the famous Florida land boom started, so G. S. and Anne went to Florida to see how things were done and to contact developers who might be interested in the Island. He found a man whose firm was developing a millionaire’s resort on Fishers Island, and had sold on paper over $7,000,000.00 worth of property around Lakeland. Word was sent home to Ellery to wire and talk seven figures. G. S. wrote to Anne, who had gone back home, “Am playing for big game, we may be rich yet.” She took no stock in such talk. Mother was the more realistic of the two. Nothing came of it. He and Ellery decided to start in a small way themselves.

A small lot sub-division was laid out on the hillside south of the old Mason House. A new road was run from the crest of the hill southward toward the Sound, eliminating the old road along the shore. In 1927 they build the little stone Gate House for an office, and engaged the real estate firm of Dugan & Hurley of Hartford as sole selling agents. Several of the little lots were sold and built on, including one for Granddad Allyn, who was always helping out. G. S. took a salary of $3,000. and Ellery $1,000. The Mason’s Island Yacht Club was formed and built a new clubhouse on the site of the old fish works. There was a new $10,000. mortgage on the Jordan property. That winter Grandma Allyn

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wrote from Daytona "The developments all look forsaken. Most land offices are closed. So many people have lost money." The boom had collapsed faster than it started. G. S. opened an agency to sell Johnson motors and Sea Sleds, built at his grandfather's old yard at Old Field. A dozen 13 foot Sea Sleds with 10 horse Johnson motors were sold to members of the Yacht Club for weekly races. A college friend Ben Thomas bought a lot to help him out.

The Florida collapse did not seem to discourage speculators. The stock market began running wild. In September 1929, a month before the Crash, the Stone House in Jordan was sold to Adelbert L. Burr for $20,000.00. He gave a $10,000.00 mortgage, paid $2,000.00 in cash and a note for $8,000.00 on the balance. G. S. took out another mortgage for $2,000.00 on the property he still owned on Avery Lane. It was to be three years before the stock market hit bottom and all the banks were closed. In 1929 no one had any conception of what the Depression would turn into. G. S. bought an old 40 foot cutter at Frank Bindloss's yard for $300.00. It had been hauled out for several years, but we put it in shape ourselves. We moved into the Gate House on the Island and Gurd entered the Wharton School at Penn. I left for my last year at Yale, and the next year after graduation went to work in Boston.

In 1931 people thought the Depression had surely hit bottom. Counting on the money from the sale of the Jordan house, G. S. started his own new house on the Island. We moved in the next spring. Earlier Gurd had a ruptured appendix in a swimming meet, having broken the inter-collegiate record in the breaststroke the week before. He recovered with no ill effects, and graduated the next year. All this time there was no income from the sale of land, and very little from Burr's mortgage. He too was having a tough time with his marina on Pequot Avenue in New London. Granddad had stepped in again to help pay the boys' tuition.

About this time G. S. began his collections of old firearms and shipbuilders' half models. He and Anne drove all over southern New England buying and swopping guns. Cleaning and repairing them took a lot of his time. When he died there were several hundred. Starting with two clipper ship models his grandfather Maxson had built at Old Field, he picked up between 80 and 90, including several fishing smacks from Noank. Some came from as far away as Nova Scotia and the Carolinas. The biggest haul came from Cramp's Shipyard in Philadelphia, closed down between wars. Many of these he gave to Kirt to start the Mystic Seaport collection. Several times I sat in with them in Kirt's office where he sat perched on his air cushion smoking his reeky old pipe. They spent hours discussing who Kirt would get in with him to start things off. He decided on Carl Cutler for his knowledge and experience with sailing ships, and Edward E. Bradley, a retired and wealthy silk machinery manufacturer from Stonington. Kirt's ideas for the present Seaport sounded like a pipe dream to most of his friends. Fortunately he persuaded his cousin Mrs. Edward S. Harkness to put up a lot of the money, and being unmarried he put all his own into it.

Another hobby G. S. had was building and rigging scale ship models. He turned out several, including the steamer G. S. Allyn, often using his old surgeon's tools. Mother
made the sails. Brother Louie had got the Mystic River made a wild life sanctuary, but G. S.'s interest was in preserving the shore. He started Mystic Valley Parks, Inc. to take title to unused waterfront property. The first piece was some marsh land, now the south part of the Seaport grounds. The biggest scoop was the marshy area south of the buildings on West Main Street. William I. Main became a local hero when he deeded it over, but after he died it was found that he had previously deeded it to his daughter Hazel. G. S. had hopes of getting Fort Rachel, the one really historic spot in Mystic, but no one could come up with the money. A few years ago the Groton Planning Commission issued a permit for a restaurant to be built on the site, but as yet nothing has been done.

In 1936 Ellery decided to sell his interest in the Masons Island Company to G. S. for $10,000.00 and a waterfront lot. G. S. got a mortgage on the Island to pay for it. By 1937 with the economy picking up for another war, land on the Island started to sell again. He and I went into the building business, and on June 18, 1938 I married Emily.

Figure 29. Capt. Gurdon S. Allyn, Jr.

ANOTHER WAR. On December 7, 1941 the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor. Gurd, married and working in New York, joined the 507th Airborne Infantry and was soon made a company commander. That fall I had finished my last house and got a job as Navy Inspector on the new construction at the Sub Base. The next spring I joined the Army myself as company commander in the 333rd Engineers. Pop with nothing to do on the Island and with very little income, took over my Navy job, and then worked for Wadhams, May and Carey, a Navy contractor. One check for two months pay was $517.00. He had
tried to get back into the Navy, but was turned down on account of his age. He had to 
quit work in 1943 with a bad heart.

That fall both boys were in England. There were weeks of anxious waiting after D 
Day, June 6, 1944. No word had come home for several weeks. Then the telegram came 
from Washington.

THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET 
THAT YOUR SON CAPTAIN GURDON S. ALLYN JR WAS KILLED IN 
ACTION ON TWENTY FOUR JUNE IN FRANCE LETTER FOLLOWS.

Gurd's unit had made the drop the night before D Day near Amfreville. The next 
day he was taken prisoner, and was shot on June 15 while trying to escape to join his 
mens, little knowing that nearly 80% were casualties. He was buried in the American 
Cemetery near St. Mere Eglise. It was nearly a year before the folks learned what had 
happened. A boy in his outfit wrote "He was just a regular fellow, and wouldn't ask none 
of his men to do nothing he would not do himself." Afterward he was brought home and 
buried at Elm Grove.

During the war some of the people on the Island tried to carry on as usual. At one 
point when Gurd and I were both overseas, they wanted to run a new water line to the 
club. G. S. blew up. As Mother had said before they were married, he wore his heart on 
his sleeve. He was goaded and harrassed like an old bull buffalo by a pack of hyenas. 
Mother took it the hardest, but she kept it inside.

For all his hard work, Pop was not much of a "success" in business or politics. 
People found it easy to put things over on him. He always tried to think the best of 
everybody. He was always happiest at sea. When he got too old to handle the sloop, he 
got an old Elco cruiser and spent many weeks around New England waters with young 
Charlie Buddington from Noank. For him it was like stepping off into a world he could 
meet on his own terms. Sometimes he would tell me, only half jokingly, that he would 
like a Viking funeral. "Just head me out to sea in an open boat."

He died of a heart attack on December 28, 1951, the day before his seventy-second 
birthday. I can remember even now one day when I was in my early twenties. I was the 
grown-up and he was the little boy who needed love and understanding. That I could 
give him.

MOTHER. Much of the tolerance and kindness to others I learned growing up came 
from Mother. Her highest praise of anyone was to say that they were a real lady or 
gentleman. Social position had nothing to do with it. If anyone were mean or small, she 
would always excuse them by saying they had not had the "advantages." People with 
money who took advantage of those less fortunate were not ladies or gentlemen.

G. S. always called her Anne, but she called herself Annie, a name any Scot was 
proud of. I remember one time when she introduced herself as Annie Allyn. A friend said 
"Oh you shouldn't say Annie, it sounds like somebody's cook." Mother simply said "That 
is my name." I never heard her use the word "servant." A person was either a hired man 
or a hired girl with equal pay for equal services. We were never taught to say "sir" as prep
schoolboys still are with its suggestion of humility. There had been too much of that when her family were in Scotland.

Mother died in her sleep when she was seventy-three, a year and a half after Pop. I found a note afterward. “Your father and I meant everything in this world to each other. We were truly married. I am thankful he went peacefully before me, because a woman can get along better. We had some very hard situations to deal with at times, but I was always with him.”

![Figure 30. Mother and Pop.](image)

**JIM ALLYN**

I was born on June 2, 1908. In November of my third year we moved to Jordan. That Memorial Day, or Decoration Day as we called it, Mother held me in her arms at the second floor window of 33 Broad Street to watch the parade go by. The young men from the Spanish-American War marched up the hill in their brown uniforms with canvas leggings and “Smokey Bear” hats. The flags with their forty-six stars billowed in the breeze; the band played Sousa marches and the hoofs of the officers’ mounts clattered on the pavement. Daddy must have remembered the boys he had seen coming ashore at Newport News ten years before.

On April Fool’s Day Della had made a pancake for him with a round piece of flannel in the middle. When he couldn’t cut it, I shrieked with delight. It was some time before when I first learned to walk, that he carried me in his arms into his office off the front hall to have a look at everything. I remember the heavy oak “Mission” style
furniture and the shiny bottles of pills on the high shelf. He told me never to go in by myself, and I never did. Another time, kept in by a cold, I pushed my little wooden train around the green border of the dining room carpet, just the right width for tracks. As a special treat Mother got some big white grapes from Mr. Musante, which she split and seeded. I carefully ate them one by one. Their savor has never been matched since.

Figure 31. Jim at 2½ Years, 1911.

A COUNTRY CHILDHOOD. The Stone House in Jordan then stood on a sandy knoll with some sparse grass and yucca plants, and two old apple trees facing the brook. It was really a pond, which the little narrow stone bridge of the Rope Ferry Road formed. What excitement that winter when an ice floe jambed the opening and water backed up right into our cellar. A gnarled old mulberry tree stood down near the pond, left from the days when people thought they could raise silkworms. Near it was a great black walnut. When the war came it was listed for possible use for gunstocks, but the “government” never came to get it. Part way down the hill a big asparagus bed was planted; a wonderful place to play hide and seek when it grew up thick and tall later in the summer. North of the house was the large vegetable garden. A few years later I had my own little patch, planted with free seeds sent out in little packets by our Congressman.

When Gurd outgrew the crib, we slept together in Grandma Maxson’s bed in the big front room. In the winter we would cuddle up to keep warm, but the rest of the year we had an invisible line down the middle of the bed. If either crossed it, the other would pound the transgressing arm or leg and shout “Get over on your own side.” The wallpaper had large blue peacocks standing on vines running from floor to ceiling. I used to imagine they went right up through into the sky. I suppose I got the idea from a very early movie
of "Jack and the Beanstalk" I had seen at the Crown Theater. The old cracked plaster ceiling was a map for all kinds of adventures. There were paths and brooks and even faces. The only framed picture I remember was of a private ballroom with the butler lighting candles in the wall sconces. The hostess looked like Mother, whose pink brocade wedding dress had been made into a ball gown with a little train, which she held up with a loop over her arm when she danced. She always came in to see us before going to a dance, sometimes with a pale rose in her hair and a daub of rouge on her cheeks from the little white jar which lasted for years.

Every night before we were tucked in, Mother would hear our prayers as we knelt by the bed. *Now I lay me down to sleep.* Then she would read us a poem or story: *Mother Goose, In winter I get up at night, I saw you toss the kites on high, It's time to take the window to see Leery going by.* And then there was the story of *The Brownie in the coal cellar.* I knew them all before I could read. Some nights we could hear the rats chasing and squealing behind the plaster next to the outside stone walls. The Christmas Eve before we moved into the big bedroom, I woke to hear someone peeing in our toilet. It had to be Santa Claus! I could not have been more awestruck if the Holy Ghost were in the next room. Early next morning I rushed to tell Mother and Daddy of the Visitation.

On early summer mornings when the rising sun came in the windows I could hear the redwing blackbirds singing "Goo-ga-lee" in the budding red maples down by the brook. How could Robert Browning so well remember the heart of a child.

The year's at the spring
The day's at the morn
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew pearled;

The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world!

Summers seemed to last forever. In the spring everything was new and fresh; the tiny buds unfolding, the ants with their great burdens, the shiny shoe-button eyes of the bullfrogs hiding in the cattails. I spent hours at a time at the sand bank building my fantasies of houses and castles in the sticky clay. The big mill pond below the road seemed like an ocean.

The Rovetti boys used to come up from the Harkness Estate where they worked to cut our lawn. Unabashedly proud of their handsome looks and strong muscular bodies, they would talk to me with their musical voices and sing Italian songs as they speeded around the grounds. Sometimes Angelo would pop out his bicep and say "Jeemee, feel my muscle." I would gingerly touch it with one finger. It felt like hard warm marble.

Daddy bought an old ship's mast for a flagpole and the biggest flag he could buy. He must have remembered his own boyhood in Mystic when they could only afford a little one. Gurd and I would raise and lower the flag every day, being careful not
to let it touch the ground. I felt that it would be as bad luck as stepping on a crack in the sidewalk. I still get a lump in my throat when I see the flag flying, but resent those “bumper sticker patriots” who put decals on their cars. It seems to cheapen the whole thing.

![Image of Gurd and Jim at Jordan.](image)

**SCHOOL DAYS.** In 1914 I entered the first grade at Jordan School. It was a whole new exciting world. Mother had taught me how to read, but that first year we learned to add and subtract single numbers. The teacher would hold up flash cards and call on different ones for the answer. Always Josephine Lanzalotta put up her hand, panting to answer. The next year we had problems like subtracting 63 from 102. I still remember the thrill when I figured out how it was done. Almost from the beginning we had to memorize and recite poems. I was never fussed afterward when I had to stand up and talk. There was one little girl who could never memorize even the first line of *Once I saw a little bird come hop, hop, hop*. There were no schools for retarded then, and she was passed along from grade to grade. She and the rest of us were the better for it.

Afterward there were poems like *The Inchcape Rock, The storming of Quebec, Barbara Frietchie* and *Old Ironsides*, and gentler ones like *Hail to thee bright spirit* and *I wandered lonely as a cloud*. Kipling’s *If you can keep your head while all about you / Are loosing theirs and blaming it on you* probably had the deepest affect. Even now I think of it when things go against me. Each spring the teacher posted a chart of spring flowers on the wall, and we all competed to see who could bring in the first of a flower. The best behaved students were awarded the honor of clapping the erasers of the chalk dust at the end of the day. I clapped them myself some times.

Every summer there was a Sunday School picnic in the woods across the mill dam. The ice cream was delivered in great wooden vats with the galvanized containers of ice
cream packed in ice and salt. In the fall we gathered chestnuts there. It was several years
before the blight struck. We would go berrying in the cow pasture on the hill above the
village. One day Mr. Littlefield fired a shotgun at us. I could hear the rock salt whistling
over our heads. The berries never tasted sweeter.

That first winter of the war in 1917 Mrs. Wolfenden, the English minister’s wife,
held singing classes at the Baptist parsonage. My country ’tis of thee, America the
beautiful and Keep the home fires burning were some of the songs we learned. I learned
to read notes and two part singing. Mother had a Steinway grand, a wedding present from
her father. She loved to play and sing, and sang in the Baptist choir. I began piano lessons
with Mrs. William Muir in New London, who took up teaching after her husband died.
Her lovely Scots voice was more musical than my playing. I must have been a “book
worm.” Mother was always telling me to go outdoors and play. There were: Treasure
Island, King Arthur, Lorna Doone, Robinson Crusoe, Robin Hood and many others, with
wonderful Wyeth illustrations. Then there were the Tom Swift books, Youth’s
Companion and St. Nicholas Magazine with games and puzzles and things for boys to
make. Having no girls, Mother taught us how to cook and sew and make beds properly.
These stood me in good stead years later when I was in the Army. During the first war I
knit six inch squares for the service mens’ “comforters,” and knit a pair of socks for
Daddy. I held the yarn so tight, though, they were much too small for him so I wore them
myself. All the little boys then wore corduroy knickers with long black cotton stockings.
When the war cut off the German dyes and American ones were used, I would find my
legs colored dark purple after a sweaty day at play.

SEX REARS ITS FASCINATING HEAD. I can’t remember when I didn’t know
about sex. When you see cows “driven” and calves born, and hear the big boys talking
around the village store, there was never any mystery about it. I wasn’t taught how to
swim either. In the brook just below the little bridge leading to the sand bank, I swam
with the boys my own age—Ken Carlson, Monroe Harwood, Albert “Abbie” Perkins,
Freddie Myers and the others. There were only leeches to bother us. We called them
bloodsuckers when we first saw the blood running down our naked little bodies. When we
were a few years older, we would go down the Cove to swim at a spot where a little
stream ran down from the east shore and formed a sandbar on the muddy bottom. Long
ago the Indians had called it Cheeduck, and we did too. Today it seems forgotten.

One summer we discovered that one of the boys, I think it was Teddie Perkins, had
fuzz around his groin. His voice had started to break too, and we knew what that meant.
He was turning into a man. About then we began diving off the railroad bridge farther
down the Cove. No one used the word naked, we were bare-assed. Poised on the top
girder until a passenger train came along, we would shriek and dive off into the water. The
boys were still not old enough for sex, but one girl had a baby by her older brother, and
another by the hired man on their farm. The workings of nature were an unremarkable
part of our lives. When Mother saw my time had come, she tried to do her duty as a
parent. One day she said “Jim, there are two kinds of girls, good girls and bad girls”
and then fled in embarrassment. There was nothing she could tell me that I didn’t know.

**FUN AND GAMES.** The sister of Teddie Perkins’s mother had married one of the canned milk Bordens. Every summer she would come and bring her Victrola. To our great entertainment the two sisters would dance the “Turkey Trot” around the sitting room. Gail Borden Ulrich was something new in our lives. We had never heard a boy sass his mother and get away with it. We had few toys, but made our own. Every boy traded for old baby carriage wheels or bicycle wheels to build an “automobile.” Two crossed sticks covered with newspaper made a kite. It was always a problem tying the right number of rags on the tail for balance. Daddy showed me how to make a whistle from a willow stick. He tapped the bark to loosen it and slid it off to cut a notch in the inside stem. We played marbles by snapping them into a ring with our fingers, and “mumble-de-peg” with the jacknives we all carried. We joined the girls in endless games of hopscotch and rope skipping. The Audubon Society taught us not to collect birds’ eggs as our fathers had done, but we would climb trees and peek in the nests. This led to swinging on the white birches. In a grove where they were still young enough to bend, we would climb toward the top of a tree and when it leaned over, would switch to another tree and so continue across the grove. One day we were joined by Eleanor Hogan, afterward Mrs. Michael Cronin. She lost her grip and fell to the ground, breaking her arm on a rock so that the bone came through. The rest of the kids ran away in fright, so I took her home. After that, mothers would always trust their girls with Jim Allyn; an uneasy responsibility I did not always appreciate.

**GROWING UP.** It was about that time that I learned that people could be deliberately mean. Gurd and I had built a little shack up in the woods near Logger Hill. One day we found it rolled down the hill and smashed to pieces. Daddy made up for it by putting a little old shed on piles out in the brook among the alder clumps. There was a single plank catwalk out to it, and the last plank was hinged to make a drawbridge which could be pulled up with a rope from inside. There were two little cots and a tiny pot-bellied stove where we would cook and make cocoa when skating in the winter. It was one of the greatest joys of my childhood.

Gurd and I never did have an allowance. Once in a while we were given a nickel to spend, but then we discovered that we could take a penny or two from the jar Mother kept on top of the stove to pay the paper boy. When the folks caught on, we were given little jobs to earn money ourselves. Mice paid 5¢ each so we bought a couple of mousetraps. Flies were ten for a penny. There were plenty around the farm, although the barn was over 300 feet from the house. It was a temptation to leave the screen door open when no one was looking, but we were warned that that was dishonest, so let it go. Two of the worst whippings I ever got in my life were when Daddy caught me telling lies. The first one he broke the handle of a hair brush over my behind. As he lost his temper and couldn’t seem to stop, Mother stood there shaking with the back of her hand against her mouth. The next time he took me down to the barn, cutting a hazel switch on the way.
He asked me if I wanted a short hard one or a long easy one. I said a long easy one, but
again he got carried away. I learned two things from those events—never tell a lie and
never lose your temper with children. Afterward I tried to live up to my lesson, but found
it wasn’t easy.

Most of the time, though, Daddy was a good father and spent lots of time teaching
me things. As I learned the names of dozens of trees, he gave me a nickel for each one.
When he thought I was old enough to milk, he promised me $5. when I had learned. It was
always a nuisance for Freddie to teach me; and after the cow tipped over the milk pail
and knocked me off the stool, I was always a little “leery” of her. I finally got $2.50 for
half learning. I learned to plant seeds at the proper season, trim the trees, feed the pigs,
rub down the horse and hitch him up, and all the other little things that go with running a
small farm. Daddy told me about the blizzard of 1888 when his mother had to beat on a
tin dishpan to guide him in from the barn, and the time when Louie was a little boy peeing
in the chicken run and a rooster nipped him thinking it had spied a worm.

The war meant very little to me except the feeling of excitement. In 1917 when I
was nine, I carried switchel to the men haying. In a pail of cold water there were rolled
raw oats, molasses and vinegar. Every farm had its own formula. The next summer I was
tall enough to drive the horse and cultivator down the rows of corn. We planted
watermelons there to hide them, but of course that was the first place boys would look.
It was like putting the key under the doormat. I was not paid for farm chores, but one
year I took charge of the chickens; fed them, nested them, ordered the food, sold the eggs
and hens to Mother at the retail prices, and kept a cash book. I learned to put a kernel of
corn on the chopping block so the chicken would stretch its head out for me to cut it off
with the ax. At the end of the year I proudly announced that I had cleared 3¢. Daddy
said “That’s fine. Where is it?” One summer I had a little vegetable stand down by the
road. By school time I had made $2.00, just enough to buy a Brownie camera.

Taking care of the furnace was a winter job. It was a little round one, just enough
to heat the dining room downstairs and the sitting room and bathroom upstairs. I had to
carry up the ashes and screen them through a rotary sifter and then pick out and save the
partly burned coals. The “Glenwood” coal range took care of the kitchen. Before Daddy
left for the Navy he bought a new large “self-feeding” furnace that burned pea coal, but
then there wasn’t enough coal anyway a large part of the time. The kitchen stove was
replaced with a new modern wickless kerosene one. Mother quit making bread after that.

**GIRLS.** I had by then become girl conscious, but was as shy as they come. It was
not until years later that I realized that girls that age were just as shy. I bitterly envied
those boys who could swing up to a girl with self-assurance and leave her blushing and
giggling. At one of the few parties in the village, one boy was suavely passing a basket of
nuts to a girl. In my frustration I kicked the basket. Unfortunately she choose that
moment to lean over and the rim of the basket gave her a bloody nose. In the winter we
skated day and night when the weather was right. There was always a bonfire, and you
asked a girl to skate with you down the length of the pond. By the time I got a girl to the
dark end I was so terrified that I skated her right back again.

That winter Mother decided that we were old enough to learn to dance. She would call us in from skating or sliding Saturday afternoons with loud cries of anguish on our part. After a good bath in the tub we dressed in our best blue serge suits and were taken

Figure 33. Blue Serge Suits. (Photograph by Bishop’s Studio, New London, Connecticut.)

in to the Mohican Hotel where the Garveys had a dancing class. One boy’s mother sent him in with white gloves, but of course he took them off in the dressing room. We were hardly out of the Penrod era. Mrs. Garvey never felt the need to play anything but three tunes on the piano—*Tuck me to sleep in my old Tucky home* for the fox-trot, four steps ahead and then three short steps to the left or right before setting off in another direction—*March on down the field* for the two-step—*Beautiful Ohio* for the waltz. I felt as stiff as a marionette, but when the Garvies danced they seemed as light as angels. There was one
girl with long blond hair who always wore a black velvet dress. Too grown up Mother thought. I developed a mad passion for her, but took great pains not to let her know. The only fun was the slipper dance at the end, when each girl put one slipper in the middle of the room. All the boys then rushed to grab a slipper and so got a partner. That was more like it. No bowing with one arm crooked in front and the other in back and “May I have this dance?” Once in a while we would do a step called *Jump Jim Crow*. It was popular in Abraham Lincoln’s time. We sang the words:

Jump, jump, O jump Jim Crow,
Make a little circle as around you go;

Slide, slide and point your toe,
You’re a naughty little fellow if you don’t Jim Crow.

**GOING TO CHURCH.** I haven’t said much about my religious training. I went regularly to the Baptist Church in Jordan from early childhood, and to church and Sunday School when Gurd and I visited the grandparents in Mystic in the summer. Every Sunday we went down the hill with Granddad. About all I remember of the services was the sun shining through Capt. Elias Wilcox’s white whiskers where he sat near the south window, and the spit curl on the Rev. Jonathan Osborne’s bald forehead. Much later Louis J. Shepler preached a sermon on the evils of big corporations. The Trustees told him to stick to the gospels.

One Sunday Schoolteacher talked a lot about the Golden Rule being the keystone of Christianity, but I never felt that a lot of Christians I knew were very kind to each other. I caught on after a while that Granddad sometimes slipped an old parishioner a $20.00 bill. One time he told me that giving didn’t count unless it hurt a little, but I felt it wasn’t on account of religion, it was just Granddad. When Daddy first went into the Navy he brought me home a little bulldog whom I loved dearly. That winter “Tip” was hit by an auto and died in my arms. I asked Mother if he had gone to Heaven. She explained that just people went to Heaven. I thought there was something awfully wrong about that if we were all God’s creatures.

Grandma never seemed to go to church much. She was always lame from working in her garden all day Saturday. I suppose she held the church to blame for Granddad’s giving up his job that time when they wanted him to work on Sundays. One time in my late teens she said to me “Jim, you ought to go to church more often. It looks well.” That finished it for me. I always felt that was the reason a lot of people I knew went anyway. Besides, Heaven sounded like a pretty dull place to live for eternity, and Hell didn’t scare me a bit. I knew I wasn’t that much of a sinner. Mother and Daddy had taught me to be a good boy.

**HIGH SCHOOL.** In the fall of 1922 I entered Bulkeley School in New London where Daddy had gone as a boy. We now called him “Pop” like the comic strip character in *'Smatter Pop*. He was as much of a trial to his father as the Katzenjammer Kids were to
the Captain. There was a bus that picked up the high school girls and boys from Dingleville on the Niantic River and the rest of us on the way through Jordan. Pop bought me a bicycle to ride the two or three miles in good weather.

I had played plenty of baseball and football on the sand lot in Jordan, but there were no organized sports at the grammar school, only Walter Camp's "Daily Dozen." At the high school the New London boys dominated all the activities and I always felt a little out of it. Anyway, I wasn't the competitive type. I did star in the school plays though, and always had a chorus part in the annual Bulkeley-Williams Memorial Institute musicals. WMI was the girls' high school. We went all through the Victor Herbert shows. My time came in senior year when I was elected editor of the Class Book.

The big social events of those years were the high school dances. They were always program dances, either at Bulkeley or WMI. You danced the first and last dance with the girl you brought, and the ones before and after intermission. I always went, but since I didn't have a regular girl, they were no big deal. It was during Prohibition, and hardly anyone drank. Things like marijuana had not been thought of. The Senior Banquet at the Mohican was something different though. Those who could get it began saving up hard liquor, and passed it out to those who had none. No Roman orgy was ever as much of a mess as that affair. Boys were throwing up and sliding under the table. Old Walter Towne, who had been looking after boys for forty-five years, sat there with a patient expression, sighed and said nothing.

As a consequence, the Senior Dance at Ocean Beach was a strictly controlled affair. When the lights were turned out and only a spot light on the turning crystal ball threw flecks of light around the room, there was plenty of snuggling, but the doors were locked and if anyone went out they were not let in again. A relatively few boys had "hot" affairs, or even bragged about non-existent ones. It seems strange today to look back on our innocence, but most of us were carefully brought up, and were unaware that we might be missing something.

I still look back with warmth and appreciation to our Senior English teacher Frank Hamlin, not too long out of college. Without him I would never have known what a good teacher really was. We did a lot of Shakespeare that year, and he had us act out different acts from the plays in school assembly to get their sound and rhythm. Assemblies were a lot of fun anyway. The Principal Homer K. Underwood loved to have us sing. Perhaps it was his way of having us work off some excess energy. We finally had to stop singing the round *Scotland's Burning* when neighbors complained. They said our shout of "Fire, fire, fire, fire" could be heard all over that part of the city.

At the end of Sophomore Year I began taking College Board Exams. When I got 35 in Latin and 43 in French I let the whole thing drop. In Senior Year I took the whole batch. When asked to put down the college on my choice I wrote Yale; thinking that if I were admitted there I could probably get in anywhere. I passed the exams, and that is where I went.

All my summers were spent on Masons Island in the Ferry House. There were few people of my own age. I sailed in a little round-bottom dinghy Gurd and I had rigged, and
did odd jobs like taking care of the water lines, but it was a pretty lonely time. I suppose it was then that I learned to be self-sufficient and dreamed my own dreams. Harry Loutrel built a tennis court below his cottage for his children and any others who wanted to play. No one used it more than myself. Through John Gray, a Bulkeley classmate, I gradually got acquainted with the young people in Mystic. His mother supported four children by teaching school, but always made me feel like one of the family. She must have sensed how I felt. After leaving Jordan, I was never really part of any group. To the Mystic kids I was a summer person, and to the Masons Islanders I was a “native.”

Figure 34. High School Senior.

**BRIGHT COLLEGE YEARS.** In the fall of 1926 I left for New Haven. I found myself not in the Freshman Quadrangle, but in an old brick tenement on York Street, soon to be torn down for the new Library. I was completely intimidated by all the “preppies” who seemed so sophisticated. One evening the dorm had elections for Student Council, so a friend and I went to the movies. When we got back someone shouted “Where were you? You only missed by one vote.” I later discovered that some of these prep school boys were putting on an act which they kept up with fearful uncertainty for the rest of their lives.

Freshman year was common to both the College and Sheffield Scientific School. In the spring I had to decide which one I wanted to go to. I still did not know what I was doing there. The Freshman courses were excruciatingly dull. Even History, which I have since found a fascinating subject from being married to Em, was mostly a series of dates in which England, France and America might as well have been on different planets for all the connection they seemed to have with each other. By the process of elimination I
settled on Civil Engineering with the Building Construction option. I could have learned as much from a good trade school. Only later did I appreciate all Yale had to offer. Uncle Graham, class of 1908, told me “It isn’t what you learn at Yale, it’s the friends you make.” But then, I wasn’t looking for a job in a brokerage house. I admit, though, that a Yale degree was of considerable help to me in later years, but mostly for the wrong reasons.

Never having engaged in organized sports, I went out for Crew as Pop had done at Penn, and for swimming because I was a good swimmer and liked it. Yale was fortunate at that time in having two top-notch coaches, Ed Leader for Crew, and Bob Kipputh for swimming. I never did get beyond class crew with a weight of 145 pounds, but was sometimes put in the 150 pound boat to throw a scare into a regular. It was the same in swimming, but I didn’t mind because Kipputh gave us all his close attention, and the boys were coming from all over the country just to swim on the Yale team.

The spring of Sophomore year the fraternities held “Hell Week” when they picked new members. It really was Hell in the College. After the boys had been looked over for a couple of weeks, they stood around the Old Campus one afternoon waiting to be “tapped.” A fraternity member, dressed in the obligatory black suit and derby, would slap a candidate on the back and shout “Go to your room.” If the boy didn’t want that fraternity he would turn his back and stand still. At the end of the afternoon the untapped boys would slink off to their dorms. Most of the pledges were made beforehand anyway. Sheff was less cruel. The candidates were tapped in their rooms. The authorities did not think much of the system, and were trying to phase it out, but the old “Elis” put up a stiff fight. There were also Honor Societies like Skull and Bones, but naturally I never gave them a thought. It involved more social position than honor. I joined Sachem Hall, a chapter of Phi Sigma Kappa, and became one of the gang. They were boys from high schools and the less prestigious prep schools.

The 1920’s were afterward known as the Gay Twenties. I did not realize it at the time that we were supposed to be a generation of hell raisers. Not that we didn’t have our high times. The dried apricot mash stewing in a bathtub stunk up the fraternity house for weeks, but it provided enough “booze” when filtered through charcoal and mixed with canned grapefruit juice to enliven several hilarious parties. There were always new musicals opening at the Shubert, and weekends at Smith or Vassar where the lucky one wore the one raccoon coat in the House, always with a derby and unsnapped galoshes. They were the days of rumble seats, and everyone always wanted to sit in back. Crashing a Wesleyan party was a favorite extra-curricular sport. I got in one through the coal cellar. It hardly showed on my tuxedo, but I got thrown out when they found I didn’t have a stamp on the inside of my wrist.

Aside from the Junior Prom, the biggest event of the year was the Football Weekend Fraternity parties. Each House (we never called them Frats) vied with the others to have the best-known “name” band—Louie Armstrong, Red Nichols and the rest. In Junior Year I was persuaded by “peer pressure” to pay the $50.00 fee for our weekend parties. This did not include putting the girl up at the Taft. I knew Mother and Pop were
not having easy going, but I didn’t know how hard up they were. It was only in later years
that I realized the sacrifices they made for me. I didn’t go to the Prom, but I didn’t miss
out altogether. Horace Bregenzer was asked by his girl at Vassar, Connie Johnson, to bring
some boys to a weekend house party at her parents’ home in Greenwich. It was an eye-
opener for me. Afterward I wrote the usual thank-you note to her mother. The next
winter when Connie had a coming-out party at the Pierre in New York I was invited, but a
Brother who had more of the social graces was not. When I asked him if he had written a
thank-you note for the other party, he said he couldn’t be bothered. In those days good
manners still counted.

During the summer vacations I learned the carpentry trade from Douglas
MacDonald, son of the same MacDonald who had rented a room from Grandma Allyn
many years before. Every Saturday night there was a dance at the new Yacht Club. With a
scarcity of boys Gurd and I were expected to attend. Pop gave us no choice. I never cared
much for dances after that. The real parties were at the Griswold Hotel in Groton at the
time of the Yale-Harvard boat races. They were the acme of what the Age symbolized.
The harbor was full of huge yachts. Roaring students and their girls, drunk on bootleg
liquor, raced around the halls of the hotel. Furniture went out the bedroom windows. A
real Scott Fitzgerald bash. I was there but not a part of it.

I always took a gang to the races in our old cutter, though. I remember one boy
from Annapolis who insisted on wearing his service pajamas with no fly buttons. Some of
the girls felt there was too much exposure, so they backed him against the mast and
closed the gap with a large safety pin. Eleanor Roosevelt was watching the performance
from a big Coast Guard cutter alongside. This was too much for Pop, who had been
watching the whole thing with binoculars from a friend’s boat farther up the river. He
came storming down in a little dinghy and proceeded to throw all the liquor bottles
overboard that he could find. They were mostly empty; we had hidden the others when
we saw him coming. Soon after, the Annapolis boy quietly passed out below. When he
threw up on his chest, we simply covered him with a blanket.

Inevitably Graduation Day came in June 1930. I ended up with a C+ average. In
those days the faculty called them as they saw them. There was no inflation in college
grades. In the spring representatives of some big firms in New York had interviewed us for
jobs after graduation. I signed up for the Aluminum Corporation of America, and was one
of the few invited to go to New York to see the head man. He was like a caricature.
Squatting behind a huge desk he barked “What makes you think you would make a good
salesman?” I was taken aback because a sales job had not been mentioned and was the
last thing I was interested in. Needless to say I didn’t get the job. Appreciating the
significance of the question, however, I was able to do a good turn for a friend of mine,
Ed Cahill, a big husky fellow with the easy grace of a baseball player who had broken the
intercollegiate breaststroke record in his Freshman year. Ed got his professor of Industrial
Psychology to make a class project of it, and learned the answer by heart. When he was
interviewed by Mr. Big the next week he recited the whole thing with calm assurance. The
Old Man leaped to his feet and said “That’s the best answer I ever had.” Ed got the job
and worked up to a high position in the company.

**BOSTON.** As for myself, good old Harry Loutrel recommended me to a M.I.T. classmate Archie Monks who headed a small firm of architects and engineers in Boston. When interviewed, I was asked how much I wanted. Knowing the going rate for Yale graduates was $25.00 a week, I said $30.00. Monks agreed, never having hired a college graduate before. The rest of my classmates were astounded. My stock was never so high. The Depression hit the building business first, and after finishing a warehouse for First National in Somerville, the firm got no more jobs. I sat at my drawing board and read the whole set of Rafael Sabatini. Before the winter was out the office closed and I was out of a job. There was no Unemployment Compensation in those days.

It had been eight months of fun. Three classmates and I lived in a “railroad” flat near Harvard Square. There were lots of invitations from all around Boston. One weekend we had a party to pay back all the girls who had entertained us. We made up a huge batch of punch with fruit and a lot of fancy non-alcoholic liquors which were available. Two gallons of grain alcohol were bought through a bootlegger. The party went on most of the night. We finally carried one of the boys down two flights of stairs to take him home. The next morning we found the alcohol still unopened. It had been the wettest “dry” party ever held.

For two or three weeks I looked for a job around Boston, but there was nothing available. Back to the Island, I did odd jobs into the summer. That fall Pop figured that with what I had made and what he could spare I could go to Architecture School. The American Fontainbleau School in France sounded intriguing, but when I phoned Dean Meeks at Yale to inquire about it, he persuaded me to come back to Yale. With the Depression they were scratching around for students. I had already done the first year along with my last year at Sheff. The courses still followed the old Beaux Arts system and concentrated on things with columns and “enrichment” made popular at the World’s Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893. When we ended up the year designing a monastery for the Rocky Mountains, I decided that architectural training was too far removed from reality. The next year the School threw out the whole curriculum, but I had left for good.

Back home again in 1932, I scratched for what odd jobs I could find. With Charlie Anderson I replaced a dock for Rand Jones at the rate of 75¢ an hour, out of which we each got 60¢. The Depression still had a year to go before it hit bottom. Of all the Architectural School graduates for the past three years, only one had a regular job. One sold postcards on the street. Three were lucky enough to get sales jobs at Macy’s.

**ELECTRIC BOAT.** Uncle Ellery got his friend O. P. Robinson, Jr., manager at EB, to take me on. In my interview Robinson said he supposed I was looking for an office job. I surprised him by saying I would rather work in the yard and learn something. Outside of boat repairs and two river gunboats for Peru they had little work. At that point they got a Government contract to build the submarine *Cuttlefish.* It was laid out for the
conventional rivet construction, but they switched to the new welding process; plugging the rivet holes and tack welding the connector angles. That winter I worked on the layout “blocks” in an unheated shed. On the advice of a banker friend of Pop’s I had put my $800.00 life savings into a good “safe” bank stock. Chatham Phoenix of New York. It failed, and I put the $100.00 I got from it into EB stock, then selling for 4 1/8. I thought I could at least keep my eye on my investment. A year later it had lept to 16, so I sold it and bought a second-hand Model A Ford roadster.

To hire as many people as possible, the Government contract called for a 28 hour week. My pay was 60¢ an hour, and I worked four seven hour days. My shift was Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, which meant that someone else worked on my job for two days. There was no prefabrication whatever. The inefficiency was monumental. When they started the Shark and Tarpon, the Government called for a Company Welding Inspector. They flipped through the file cards and found me with an Engineering degree, so I got the job. My pay went up to $25.00 a week. It didn’t seem so at the time, but being at EB was one of the most enjoyable work experiences of my life. We all groused together and I made many good friends. I was then twenty-six years old.

ARCHITECT AND CONTRACTOR. In 1935 Elinor Stewart Ayers, heiress to a New York fortune, bought Clam Point on the river to put up a little house and engaged me to design something. The plans grew and grew. When Pop and I got the contract to build it at cost plus 10%, I gave up my job at the Boat Company and put together a work crew. “Jimmie” Ayers told me to go ahead and send monthly bills for payment to the New York office. She didn’t get back from Europe until the house was done, and said she was delighted.

By 1936 due to the threat of war, the economy burst out of the Depression. Over the next two years I designed and built several good sized houses. Although an Architect was not supposed to dirty his hands with building, I thought at the time, and still do, that it was the best way to learn practical design. Through young Winslow Ames, director of the Lyman Allyn Museum in New London, I drew plans for a one story addition to the Museum. I could not but feel outraged when several years later they put a “modern” second story on it. Most architects seem to ignore the style of a building when they put an addition on it. The most suitable one I know is on the Stonington Library.

FALLING IN LOVE. The summer of 1937 my cousin Emily began coming down from Mystic to go sailing and swimming with me. In the fall she transferred from New College at Columbia to Connecticut College in New London. One winter’s day when we were skating on the Ice Pond, I was struck by a Revelation right out of the Old Testament. I was in love with her! Being cousins and eight years older, I tried to tell myself it was an impossible situation; but one night the next spring coming back from a swimming meet in New Haven, I pulled off the road in a thick fog and asked her to marry me. It was only then that I found out that she felt as desperately as I did. Although her father was my uncle, I felt that I should ask him for his daughter’s hand, and tackled him in his
workshop over his garage. He kept his back turned and began to shake. For a moment I thought he was laughing, but then realized he was shaken by sobs. He always did cry when he got upset. With his blessing I broke the news to Mother and Pop. Poor Mother, bound by the conventions, leaned back in her chair with a groan and closed her eyes. Pop, on the other hand, broke into a great grin and said he knew it all the time. Grandma Allyn, herself the descendent of many pairs of cousins, thought it very appropriate. At a cocktail party a few weeks later, one of our neighbors kept saying to Em “It’s perfectly all right, it’s perfectly all right.” After some time of this, Em snapped “Of course it’s all right. That’s the way they breed race horses.”

We were married on June 18, 1938, a week after she graduated from college. Granddad had been near death for some time, so we had the ceremony at her father’s house on Library Street. I was thirty years old. In the silence before the Rev. Mr. Shepler tied the knot, Em’s sister Lucia was unsuccessfully trying to get the heel of her shoe out of the hot air register, and I was swallowing the last mouthful of chicken salad I had snitched from the kitchen. The two old grandmothers were quietly sobbing. Since I was too busy with my work to go on a trip, we moved into the Gate House on the Island, and in December went to Williamsburg.

I kept busy designing and building houses. The next year our own Louie was born on July 18. That fall I bought the cottage across the street from Grandma Allyn and made it a year round house. The next year we were living there on September 5 when Rufus was born.
WORLD WAR II. By the time a year had passed, the threat of war brought building once more to a halt. I finished my last house and got a job as Construction Inspector for the Navy. They were expanding facilities at the Sub Base and putting up a development of small houses for increased personnel.

It was a bright breezy Sunday on December 7, 1941 when word came over the radio that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. Instinctively I knew, in spite of my Navy job and two small children, I would go. I had no illusions of glory or of what my boys might think. I only knew that I must do everything I could to stop Hitler and the world he was creating. If it had been Vietnam, I would have gone to jail first.

There was a popular song “Old soldiers never die, they only fade away.” Of course they do no such thing, they simply become garrulous. I could write a whole book about my next four years in the Army, but will try to limit myself to some outstanding impressions. Early the next spring I learned that an Army Engineer colonel James B. Cress was forming a regiment for construction work. He had graduated third in his class at West Point but had run an auto agency until the war came along. I went to Boston for an interview armed with a letter of recommendation from retired Gen. Sherwood A. Cheney, for whom I had built a house on the Island. With my construction experience and college ROTC, Cress offered me a commission for a company commander. He asked if First Lieutenant would be all right. Not knowing that I was supposed to bargain, I told him whatever he thought. Afterward I found that some of the others went in as Captain. In May the 333rd Engr. Regiment (Special Service) went to Camp Dix for basic training. With six Master Sergeants in each company, we were set up to supervise attached units and prisoners of war. Fortunately we were assigned a cadre of a First Sergeant and six other Sergeants from the North Carolina National Guard, a fine group of men. The other 170 men in Company C were handpicked for construction experience, but none had any military training. One sergeant, for example, was a major sub-contractor on Boulder Dam.

We first shipped out to Camp Claiborne in the swamps along the Mississippi. All I can remember about it was the humidity. We were always soaked whether it rained or not. We were supposed to build a railroad line to nearby Camp Polk by digging out the swamp to make a high roadbed, but the locomotive squashed it down and rolled over on the first trip. All the crushed stone for ballast in the roadbed had to be brought down from Missouri, the nearest source of supply. Louisiana had the “open range” law which prohibited fencing property against wandering cattle. Our first duty every morning was to pick up the cow flops left during the night.

In August we moved to Rossford outside of Toledo, Ohio. No other military unit had ever been there before, and we were given a hero’s welcome by the Red Cross “ladies” in their gray draperies. People in town vied to treat us to meals and drinks. We kept up our military training with field maneuvers, digging trenches and machine gun nests and all the rest of it. Although principally a heavy construction outfit, we had to be ready for front line duty. Our main job was putting in a railroad marshalling yard in a beet field, which turned out to be almost as muddy as Louisiana when the fall rains came. We put our cot legs on boards to keep them from sinking down in, with another board to put our
shoes on. As soon as the day's work was done we all headed into town for hot showers at the Y.M.C.A. Every once in a while the men were called out before reveille for "short arm" inspection. Without penicillin venereal disease was always a threat. I had to hold the flashlight for the medical officer. In addition we were treated every six months to a training film on the evils of prostitution. Before the war was over, I knew that film's whorehouse down to the pattern on the lace curtains.

A Second Lieutenant showed up on the job one day riding a horse. I guess he had seen too many Civil War films. This was too much even for Col. Cress, who was trying vainly to make us a spit and polish outfit. Another day, bored with standing around, I was digging in a ditch with the other men. The colonel saw me and heard me call them "fellows." I was to call them "men" and I had to write 100 times "I will be a good officer." I felt that I had been put back in the fourth grade. I never did call them "men."

Early in the winter we went by train to the Desert Training Center in southern Arizona. The *Eyes of Texas* faded to silence as we joggled hour after hour across the sagebrush flats. On arrival we camped out near Yuma, then a small town surrounded by lettuce fields. There we built an Army Field Hospital before moving on to Needles, California to build another one on the bluffs above the town. There was nothing to do in Needles but play the slot machines at the Elks Club. Afterward they built a new hall with the profits. No matter what our regular chow might be, the Army always came through with a turkey dinner for Christmas. The cooks were up long before dawn, but a violent sandstorm came up; and when we finally sat down to eat, the turkey, mashed potatoes and everything else was seasoned with fine grit. One of the young lieutenants who had been a wine salesman saved the day for us five officers by producing several bottles of wine. The enlisted men of course took care of themselves. About midnight I was awakened in my sleeping bag by the youngest lieutenant who was on duty. Carefully brought up by a Southern Baptist family, he felt that liquor was an invention of the Devil. He gasped "Jim, you've got to do something. The empty bottles are going over the edge of the arroyo like a waterfall." When I found out there were no fights, I suggested he go back to bed. There had to be a time for us all to let off steam, and I made it my unofficial policy during the rest of the war.

When that job was done, we camped out in the desert. The heat was stifling, even at night. Once when I was lying on my stomach in the back of a truck, bare white bottom exposed to the stars, two black fellows from an attached dump truck company went by in the moonlight. I heard a soft voice "I thought there was supposed to be blackout around here." The Army still had segregated units. Gen. Patton was in command at the time. He insisted that we all wear wool O.D. shirts with neck buttoned up and necktie, and sleeves rolled down and buttoned at all times.

Later we moved to a little village called Spadra near Covina to enlarge a state mental hospital for a more permanent Army hospital. Los Angeles was within driving distance and we made the most of it. I started dropping in on the wife of a friend from Mystic, Dr. Stuart Knox. He had gone off with the Marines. I soon decided, however, that *Em* had better come out, and fast. We got a little apartment in Covina, and she and Louie stayed
for the last part of the summer, leaving baby Rufus with Mrs. Frank Chesebro in Noank. It was a wonderful time.

OVERSEAS. Early in the fall of 1943 we were alerted for North Africa. Everything was packed and we waited from day to day. When the order came to move out, Frank Tohey, the motor sergeant, gave a quick look at his watch. "Just time to go and give Mary a throw." There was always a Mary wherever we stayed. He was back in an hour and we loaded on the troop train and headed east for Norfolk. Part way across our orders were switched for Camp Shanks on the Hudson, the departure point for Europe. After the last shakedown we boarded ship in Brooklyn to the tunes of a tired Army band. Luckily for us it was a new air-conditioned passenger-banana boat snatched off the Caribbean run. They just had time to put triple deck bunks in the hold, but the freezing lockers were still stuffed with fancy passenger food.

Before another year was out the company had been doing little jobs all around Salisbury Plain, the English training area. I spent much of my time going between each platoon or even squad keeping track of the work. One of my biggest problems was what to do with our "ninety day wonders," those Second Lieutenants who were assigned to us after graduating from Officer Candidate School. On the other hand, our First Sergeant Paul Smith, one of the original cadre, whom I repeatedly tried to get a commission for, was turned down because he did not get a high enough score in the I.Q. tests. He had leadership ability and good common sense, the things the tests never showed. I decided then, and still believe, that those tests were devised by the bookish types who only perpetuate their own kind.

I saved up two three-day passes to attend a course at Oxford for United Nations military personnel, which included Poles, Norwegians, Australians, Canadians and even some English. Every day there were lectures on the English Constitutional system and History with a social event each night. There was a dance at Rhodes House, closed for the war, the little theatre, and a "musicale" at the home studio of a retired English concert singer Miss Denke. During the intermission, with the usual conversation opener, she asked where I was from. When I said Connecticut, she asked if I knew the Misses Nevins. When I told her I had lived almost across the road from them in Jordan, she did not seem at all surprised. Connecticut was such a little state.

One evening a few of us from camp were asked for supper by a farmer named Crouch, who lived in a Wuthering Heights' type farmhouse out in the country. After a couple of shots of homemade applejack we sat down to a great platter of french fries surrounded by fresh fried eggs. We had had neither since leaving home. There was a big pitcher of fresh milk, another rare treat. Mrs. Crouch, a buxom blond farmer's wife, graced the occasion with a low cut black velvet dress. We stared at her goggle-eyed while Crouch sat there smirking at the compliment.

At Teffont Evias I met the Trotters. He was a Scotsman and had developed the holopane lens for lighthouses when a young man. She was an Irish poet. She seemed to know everybody, and offered me letters of introduction to notables in whatever town I
might be stationed. When I mentioned Chickslade, she said I might like to meet Mr.
Chamberlain, brother of the Prime Minister. "He isn’t a bit like his brother.” I did not
take advantage of any of her offers, but was continually amazed at the hospitality of the
English when they had so little food and so much to be concerned with. To make us more
welcome, the Army authorized us to take a packet of butter, wheat flour and sugar if any
of us were asked out for a meal.

The Colonel said to me one day “The Chaplin tells me you have the best company
in the regiment.” When I asked why, he said “He told me none of your men ever came to
see him.” The standard punishment for A.W.O.L. was to dig a hole 6 x 6 x 6 feet, and
then fill it in again. Late one night one of the boys who had been out on a drunken spree
came around to my pup tent for the expected duty. I sent him out in the interests of
discipline. When I went out a couple of hours later he was hard at it, sweating and
groaning. I pitched in to help dig the full six feet and then helped him fill it in again. He
told me afterwards he wouldn’t have minded digging the hole, but filling it in was just
too much.

I never gave KP for punishment, standard for the Army for many generations, but
made it a privilege to work in the Mess. One Indian boy from Arizona, who lived in a
hogan in the desert, had never had a full bath in his life. His heart was set on working in
the Mess, so I showed him how to clean his nails and wash with soap to qualify. He made
it after two or three weeks. All of our Indians finally made at least two stripes. Another
time an Indian Staff Sergeant cook came in after being gone for three days. He saluted
and said “Private Cooper reporting, sir.” We looked at each other and I said “Well,
Sergeant; did you have a good time?” “Yes, sir!” The men all agreed that he deserved to
keep his stripes.

In the spring of 1944 we moved to Porthcawl in southern Wales, where the
beaches of hard sand went out for a quarter of a mile. There we practiced waterproofing
our vehicles for landing on the invasion beaches. It was an amusing sight to see the men
driving around with water up to their necks with two pipes sticking up. One was an
extension of the exhaust, the other for air for the carburetor. When we took our daily
hikes we would sing Tipperary to the amazement of the old Welsh codgers who would
make jokes in Welsh and cheer us on. One day a bunch of us went down to a little seaside
restaurant. The proprietor asked “What’ll ye have?” When we answered “What have you
got?” he said “chips.” One fellow asked if he had any eggs, which brought forth a flood
of abuse. When the plates of chips arrived, there were two fried eggs hidden underneath
for which he charged nothing. All his talk was for the benefit of the few Welsh customers.

About the end of April we moved to a wood a few miles north of Southampton.
Col. Cress had gone on to another assignment and our battalion commander Lt. Col. Guy
Langstroth was put in command of the regiment. By then I was Captain and took over
command of the First Battalion, but it was a long time before I made Major, and never
did get to be Lieut. Colonel. I discovered finally that the Adjutant, who had lost
command of his company, was very jealous and deliberately screwed up the papers
whenever they were put through for my promotion. It did not bother me much, as I had

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no intention of making the Army a career. Actually I got rather a kick out of it, especially when I was in command of the regiment when we went over to France. A staff officer gasped in disbelief when I said I was Captain Allyn. Langstroth, who had gone over a few days before us, was so flustered that he forgot the Second Battalion under Lt. Col. Albert Berry, and left them sitting in Wales for a couple of weeks.

The woods near the invasion ports were filling with thousands of men and material. Camouflage was strictly enforced. There were not even footpaths across the fields. We all knew it was coming, but nobody knew when. Every day two other unit commanders and myself received stereoptican air photos of Cherbourg, but I could not tell anyone else in the battalion, even my closest friends. I noted when the Germans blew up a certain building or sank a ship in a wet dock. The names and locations of the streets and shops became more familiar to me than Mystic.

**INVASION.** One windy morning before dawn on June 6, 1944 we were all awakened by a roar that shook the air we breathed. The whole sky was filled with planes heading south, while far above them another layer were heading north. For three weeks we knew nothing, except that the planes were still flying. Then the order came to move out, and we drove in trucks down the little lanes green with new foliage to a park above Southampton. Two days later we were down on the “hards” and boarded an LCI (Landing Craft Infantry). Tethered balloons filled the sky and anti-aircraft guns bristled everywhere. A young English Ensign leaned on a ship’s rail, his eyes completely red with fatigue. He said he had not been in bed for a week. We sailed after dark. The next morning a low coastline lay ahead of us, but it was England! With a shortage of fast PT
boats we had spent the night on patrol duty, guarding the LCT's (Landing Craft Tank) with the trucks and other equipment.

Later in the day we sailed for France. The Allies held the sky. To starboard we could see the hills around Cherbourg, but we kept on to the east side of the Normandy peninsular. It was three weeks after D Day and the shelling had stopped. When we went ashore on the beach, it was like landing at Misquamicut, sand dunes and a couple of gravel roads across the ponds to the mainland. On the way through Valognes we saw incredible destruction, not like picturesque ruins in war movies. Signal Corps men were stringing wires everywhere. Walky-talkies had not been developed. Parachutes still hung in trees, and there were gliders smashed against the tall posts that the Germans had set up in all the open fields. I thought of Gurd. Cherbourg surrendered that night, and the next morning we went in. The road down into town was almost choked with prisoners marching out under guard. Their haggard faces looked numb, but for them the war was over.

The city had not been bombed because the Americans wanted to use it for a port. Flat stone shingles filled the streets, loosened by gun concussions. Only the big concrete railroad station on the pier had been blown up by the Germans, built by them several years before as part of their reparations from the first World War. After checking for booby traps we moved into barracks in the Navy Yard, first built by Napoleon when he planned to invade England. The city was deathly quiet. That night I heard a quavering voice call out "Halt, who's there?" followed by a rifle shot. The next morning there was a dead cow on the street. With no refrigeration the Germans had driven herds into the town to supply fresh meat. They had been living on that and sliced dried potatoes. We found little else.

We went straight to work around the clock. I was on the job day and night. We first set up cranes on the seawall to unload heavy nets of supplies brought in by DUWK's shuttling in from the Liberty ships outside the breakwater. Mine sweepers were soon at work. With a sixteen foot tide, they only dared work in the harbor at high water. One young Canadian, against orders, took his sweeper out at low water. There was a blinding flash and then nothing. The pile drivers which we had loaded in England came in on steel barges, and great rafts of 60 foot piles. The planning was superb. The Transportation Corps, officered almost entirely by Reserve Officers, has never been given credit enough for the job they did all through the war.

We went straight to work building a pier for the first Liberty ships to unload at the Gare Maritime where the great liners of the 1930's had landed. One night there was a bad blow and many of the DUWK's lost their cargoes. The next morning we picked up frozen steaks and strawberries along the beach intended for Navy personnel and the Seabees. Those southern Congressmen sure took care of their own. We ourselves lived for weeks on K Rations—graham crackers, potted meat and scrambled eggs and other delicacies. There was toilet paper in the breakfast box and a couple of cigarettes for lunch. The Army took care of its own too. One of the top officers in charge of building the Al-Can Highway was briefly mentioned in the papers as being charged with taking large kickbacks from contractors. The next thing we in Cherbourg knew, he was placed in nominal charge of
our operations and given a promotion. There was no Court-Martial, but he soon disappeared from the picture.

Having attained the rank of Major, I was placed on a General Court-Martial case. A soldier was charged with raping a French civilian. The Regular Army Colonel at the head of the Court insisted we find him guilty. The other four of us, all Reserve Officers, said there was not enough evidence. The Colonel threatened us with a bad report on our service records. Not being career officers, we couldn’t care less, but realized that Regular Army officers would have meekly obeyed.

After working feverishly to complete the pier, we cheered when the first Liberty ship unloaded three weeks later. To our astonishment the whole cargo was a pre-fab village for 3-star General Lee and his staff. No tents for them. Lee had a full Colonel on his staff just to handle his publicity. I have since seen an “official” history of that phase of the operations. It is hard to believe they were talking about the same port. All that winter we worked on the piers, ran a stone crushing plant for railroad ballast, swept mine fields, patched the icy highway out of town toward Paris for the “Red Ball Express” whose heavy trucks continually broke up the lightly paved highway, and countless other jobs. At one point Gen. Patton made a spectacular but unauthorized breakthrough with his tanks, and was cut off. All other work stopped, disrupting supply schedules, while we built a temporary air field to rescue the hero. The “front” was not a continuous fortified line. There were many places where a commander could have gone into enemy territory, but teamwork was essential. The Allied advance could not have accommodated many such inspirational leaders.

After seven months in Cherbourg we began to feel the war had passed us by, but then we were moved to Le Havre. The lower town and waterfront were knocked flat. While we were there, the Germans made their last major attempt to reach the Channel. They surrounded Bastogne, scene of Gen. McAuliffe’s famous reply of “Nuts” when asked to surrender. I got orders to send 10% of our men up to the front. Who to send? First I asked for volunteers. There were a few. Then I picked out all the unmarried men. Still not enough. Then the men with no children. The final group were men I thought we could best spare from our assignments. Months later I saw one of the men and asked him what they all thought of being sent from a supposedly non-combat outfit. He said they knew I had to do it, and was as fair as possible. Most of the other engineer outfits simply unloaded their misfits.

While still at Le Havre we spent a lot of our time clearing German minefields. They had methodically laid their mines in careful patterns, so after locating ten or twelve we knew where to look for all the rest. It was only later when we ran into mines of clay, plastic or wood that the detectors did not locate, that we ran into trouble. It got our goat though when we had to clear a golf course at Deauville for the top brass of Normandy Base Headquarters. One colonel even got shirty when we wouldn’t fix the elevator in the four story hotel where they lived. There was one thing that interested me. Whenever I went into a headquarters I was asked first thing if I had a command. To console themselves for their desk jobs, those officers awarded each other medals, and became the
laughingstock of the other Allied forces. I myself was given a Bronze Star, which had become a sort of officer's Good Conduct Medal. We all got ETO ribbons with four “battle stars,” which simply meant we were within a certain area within certain dates. The only medal we had any respect for was the Silver Star awarded to Infantrymen. Before the war was over our regiment did get a Meritorious Service Award, which few other outfits got.

Early the next spring when the front began to move east, we were loaded on the old “40 Hommes 8 Cheveaux” boxcars of World War I fame. At one stop a staff officer hollered to ask what car our colonel was in. Without thinking I answered “Six cars aft.” There were shouts of “Hey, sailor, what are you doing here?” We rebuilt track and railroad bridges across the Saar into Germany, and when the Rhine was crossed at Nimegen, we were rushed up to Mainz. All kinds of units were assembled to drive piles and build a railroad bridge across the river. Our battalion was assigned the job of building the approach on the flat east bank. For several days all of our material had been assembled, but the General in command wanted to wait until everybody’s last piece for the bridge was on hand so that he could try to beat Julius Caesar’s record of ten days, which had been set almost two thousand years before farther up the river. By this time we were all fed up with these gold starred glory hounds and the men were on the point of revolt. Following my regular custom of having staff meetings with the Sergeants, I told them one evening that we would start first thing the next morning no matter what. At the crack of dawn we began, and three hours later the order came down to start in. It was not the last time I laid myself open for Court-Martial.

When the bridge was opened, more than ten days later, Gen. Patton came for the dedication. He gave the filthiest talking speech I ever heard. He thought it was the way to talk to the “men.” Later in the day a sergeant came across the bridge on one of the little gasoline track cars to tell me that Patton was handing out Legion of Merit medals to all Field Grade officers and above. I said that if they were that cheap he could keep them, and stayed on my own side of the river.

Heading east once more some of us turned off at Weimar to see the infamous Buchenwald. Even before we got there we passed ghostly gray shadows tottering down the road in their long cotton striped coats. When we got to the camp, there were still a few living skeletons on the board racks which passed for beds. Some Communists had gotten there before us and had posted a large sign over the gate deploring the Nazis. They did not bother to care for the survivors. The American Army was hauling civilians up from town to have a first-hand look. They all said they had no idea what was going on up there. Stacks of bodies were neatly arranged next to the outdoor ovens, which still contained warm ashes. The Germans had been burning them up until the last moment. I tried to tell myself that such a thing could never happen in America, but knowing bigotry as I did, I was not so sure. The Germans, too, considered themselves civilized people.

We were continually being warned not to fraternize with the civilians. Frank Tohey, who always had a girl wherever we were, found it especially frustrating. In one little town where everybody had fled, the boys in the motor pool found a blond wig and talked one
young fellow into putting it on and getting into bed for a joke on Frank. After dark he came leaping up the stairs and went into the bedroom while some of us gathered around the closed door. Shortly there was a strangled cry “You son of a bitch, you’re a boy.” followed by an enraged “I’m going to have you anyway.” There was a piercing yell and our “girl” came plunging out the door, lipstick and rouge red against an ashen face.

We kept leapfrogging over other engineer units as far east as Weissenfels just short of Leipzig, now in East Germany. When the top brass decided to let the Russians come in, we knocked off and went south to Nürnberg and the last hold-out area around München (Munich). At every town we came to, the civil administrators had fled, so we had to detail an officer to be temporary Mayor. In some places there was no food at all, and children clawed our garbage pails clean. As soon as the Mess Sergeant caught on he would put out edible scraps in a clean bucket. One day the head of the German State Railroad came in and surrendered to me before the Russians got him. He wanted to get things going as soon as possible. It never occurred to any of us that there would be an East and West Germany.

I found that we were always a week or more ahead of orders, so we started our own little operations. A recon truck would go out to see what bridges needed rebuilding in a newly “liberated” area. Then I would get the sergeants together to vote on whether to go ahead on our own. Always they said yes, so off we would go with the Mess Officer forging requisitions to keep us supplied. Our orders to rebuild the bridge at Donauwörth on the Danube, for example, came through when we were already at work on the next bridge. I don’t know what our Colonel was doing, but he never came around to see what was up. At one town the German Section Foreman looked me up and said he had 70 men and tools all ready to go to work. I told him I could pay them about $1.00 a day in “Invasion Marks” which we had been issued. He said they were of no use to them, all they wanted was something to eat. Since we could not draw extra rations, the company I was with at the time voted unanimously to share what they had with the German civilian workers.

We finally ended up at Simsee, a resort lake outside Rosenheim near the Austrian border. A summer hotel was being used for vacations by the Hitler Youth, boys of fourteen and the most arrogant bunch I ever met. When I said to one boy that he spoke very good English he answered “Ve are going to rule America.” They left in short order. We were there when word came that the war was over. It was a quiet day like any other. When we heard about the frenzied crowds back home, they seemed to us like people in another world.

After building “redeployment” camps back in France for a couple of months, and tasting night life in gray grim Paris, we sailed for home in October 1945; two years after we came over.

KEEPING THE HOME FIRES BURNING. When I left for the Army in the late spring of 1942, Em and the boys stayed on at the Island; but with winter coming on and gas rationing, she rented our house and took a second floor apartment on Prospect Street to be nearer town and her father. It was pretty cold there, so he set up an iron stove in
the living room. The next summer she brought Louie out to Covina, and then there was another winter at Prospect Street. The summer after that she and the boys stayed in a little cottage "Happy Daze" at Groton Long Point, when I was going over to France. That fall they moved into Grandma Allyn's little house on Rathbun Place and took in a roomer Olive Dobson to help pay the rent. The little coal furnace kept going out, but Henry Fain always came to get it going again and offer sympathy. They were still there in the fall of 1945 when I came home.

**CIVILIAN AGAIN.** I was home once more, thirty-seven years old and no job. Louie was six and Rufus five. Through Shep Palmer, the Executive Officer of our regiment, I was hired as a draftsman with his family's architectural firm of Chandler and Palmer in Norwich. Uncle Lou had an old Ford which he let me have. It would run, but the radiator leaked so badly I had to stop at the brook in Ledyard coming and going to fill it up. There weren't even any second-hand ones available. Our own house on the Island was still rented, so we stayed on in the little house on Rathbun Place. I wanted to get into the building business again, but there were no materials on the market yet, so there was no way to get going.

Uncle Lou died the next spring, and his widow Rachel Burnet went to live with her sister Joanna on High Street. He had left the house to Em and Lucia, who was back from the Pacific with the Yale Hospital Unit, so we all moved in. We sold our house across from the Gate House and used the money to build five little cottages on Allyn's Alley on the Island. For material I bid in odd lots of framing from the Government. About all Cottrell's had was sheetrock, Celotex, tar paper and other odd lots of framing and plywood. With the summer rents I built four more cottages over the next five years. By the fall of 1946 building material became available, so I started building regular houses on speculation. We would move into a house when it was near completion and start another one. The Library Street house had been sold. While in one house on Chippechaug Trail, Em was stricken one night with a burst appendix and spent about three weeks in the hospital. She was pregnant at the time. She had hardly been home two days when she went off again in the ambulance and had a miscarriage on the way. There would be no more babies for us.

After five years of moving from house to house, Em said she had had enough, so in 1951 we build a house for ourselves which she called "Puddleby-on-the-Marsh." By then there was enough demand to build houses on order. Pop died that December of a heart attack. I was really on my own.

**HIGH LIFE.** It was not all work and no play. The first fall of 1946 after the war, the Mystic Art Association began their popular series of Artist Balls. It was a circus theme, and remembering Col. Wild Bill Cody's Wild West Show from my childhood, I went dressed as an Indian. Herb Stoops had become famous for his Indian illustrations so I asked him to paint me up. I can see him now with his pallet and brushes, squinting and daubing. I felt like nothing so much as a piece of canvas. The next year I dressed as
Figure 37. Faun.
Quequeg in *Moby Dick*. He was described as being the color of an eggplant, with a shaved head and top-knot. It was the first time of several that I shaved off my head before I finally did it permanently. By then I was getting bald anyway. One of the young fellows who worked with me, Earl Thompson, smeared me all over with a concoction I mixed up with Gentian Violet. After that I depended more and more on body paint for a costume, ending up with a green bronze statue of a faun. I did wear a papier mache fig leaf and tail and a curly mop of hair with horns. I must have had something of the Rovetti boys in me. Ethel Loutrel said I could go absolutely naked as far as she was concerned.

I won a prize with it at the Art Students League Ball in New York, and another one as the Minataur, and we went to costume balls at the old Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. By then I had taken up Indian lore as a hobby, and studied dancing with a Mohawk Indian at Ted Shawn’s school at Jacob’s Pillow. The Danish Royal Ballet was there, making its first appearance in America. Shawn asked me to be the Indian doll in their *Coppelia*, but I had to get back to the job. I must have gotten the Indian dancing down pretty well, for at one of Byron Hatfield’s pageants at Lebanon, a visiting Indian from New Mexico told me he didn’t have to ask if I had Indian blood in me. Another time Tarzan Brown, the Olympic runner, and another Narragansett asked me what tribe I belonged to. I passed it off by saying Pequot, but they couldn’t seem to place me.

In 1949 Stonington celebrated its 300th anniversary from the first settlement by *William Chesebrough*. I was the Indian chief in the parade, and first became a public figure.

**BACK ON THE JOB.** In the spring of 1952 after Pop died, property began to sell again on the Island, which had never happened to any great extent in his lifetime. Once I told him to enjoy what money he had because I could take care of myself, but he only smiled. To begin with I didn’t make much building houses. I still hadn’t learned how to figure a job very well. Louie was now thirteen and Rufus twelve. They had started school at Mystic Academy across the river, but were now going to Broadway School. I did the usual things the father of young boys does, Boy Scouts and PTA. We were asked if we wanted to send them to a new private school just starting in Stonington. Remembering the private schoolboys at Yale, I felt they would be better off going to public school with everybody else. They would have to live with all kinds of people the rest of their lives. Afterward they went to Stonington High School. At the end of Louie’s Junior year though, they both went to Gunnery, a good small prep school run by a Yale friend Oggie Miller. Contacts there, we hoped, would make it easier for them to fit in with other kinds of boys they would meet in college, and we weren’t too sure of the college preparation at the high school.

Mother died in 1953, so we rented Puddleby and went to live in the house down the Island. By then I realized that I would have to put a whole lot more time and money into capital improvements, so gave up building. From a summer resort with gravel roads and a sketchy water system, the Island was fast becoming a year-round community, and I had to put all I could spare into new roads and water supply. I had seen too many developers
go broke, so I resolved not to borrow any money but do it all with cash. Not so exciting a business, but it makes for a good night's sleep.

In 1954 Mystic had its own 300th celebration and I was again the "Indian." No one remembers that I was chairman of the ten day affair. We took in $18,000.00 and spent $9,000.00 for expenses with the balance going to the Community Center. The real star was Byron Hatfield, who planned and managed the whole thing.

There was one more Harlem party, this time without Em. The theme was Haiti. Expecting everyone to be dressed as a King Christophe or his lady, which turned out to be the case, I went as a "zombie"; three days buried and brought back to life as a mindless slave. A greenish-gray body color was gruesome enough, with a few tag ends of white cotton to suggest a shirt and pants. The reporter for the Amsterdam News was outraged when the prize went to the son of a local bigshot. If I were disappointed, I soon forgot it at a private party afterward. No one but Arthur Sebastian and a friend knew that I was white. although one girl asked me if I were Jamaican because I had blue eyes. Not knowing what kind of a party it would be, I prepared for anything. When some of the girls persuaded me to take off my shred of pants (they didn't have to try very hard), I was ready. I had gilded what didn't show before, a nice contrast to the body color.

**POLITICS.** In the fall of 1956 I was elected as a Republican to the General Assembly. There were still two from each town. The pay was $600.00 for a two year term, but we only sat every other year except for special sessions. I wanted to keep the family tradition going, and besides I was always looking for a new experience. Two years later I was reelected with Joseph Purtill, Democrat, when Ribicoff was elected Governor. I did little to make my mark in Hartford except to support Home Rule legislation and nail down the four Indian reservations in Connecticut which were about to be sold off by the Welfare Department which controlled them at the time. I also opposed legislation on birth control, saying "I believe that civil laws should not be used either to enforce or restrict religious principles or beliefs in any way." Since the State Constitution forbade sitting legislators increasing their own salaries, they got around it by giving themselves a bonus of $500.00 for "expenses." I returned my check, but few others did.

Perhaps my most important action was not legislative but ethical. That session found the two parties with exactly the same number of Representatives. During the final week we often sat past midnight. A member of each party would "pair off" to maintain the balance if two of them wanted to leave early. One night a Republican member, one of a pair, came in after midnight to take his seat saying it was a new calendar day. To keep the balance I walked out, telling the House I would have no part of such trickery. The next day both Hartford papers editorialized that I had got the Republican Party out of an indefensible situation.

Once I was asked by a small group in Stonington to talk about pending legislation. After the usual remarks about reducing expenditures and getting the government out of business, someone asked me why I thought there were so many Catholics in politics. We were all Protestants together, so I said it was probably a way for them to obtain standing
in the community, since they were discriminated against in so many other ways. One woman fluted that she never discriminated against Catholics. Another, who might be described as “Best of Breed,” cut her down by gruffing “O, come off it.”

I had never been too happy as a Republican. Both parties have their upright people as well as crooks and self-seekers, but the Republicans, more than the Democrats, managed to cloak their questionable actions with an air of sanctity. Later, in 1964 when the Republicans nominated Goldwater for president after his vigorous stand against civil rights legislation, I joined the Democratic Party. I felt that Goldwater, being a Jew, should have been especially sensitive to human rights, and was selling out for Southern votes.

**HAITI.** The winter of 1957 I went to Haiti with Arthur Sebastian. He wanted to see an independent black country. Most of Africa was still colonial. After he went home, I stayed another week and travelled all over the country in a Jeep, sometimes alone and sometimes with a couple of young art schoolteachers who had never seen much of their own country. What impressed me more than anything was the pride and bearing of the country people and their scrupulous honesty, hungry as they were.

The next year I went again by myself to be there for Carnivale, a three day affair in which the whole country took part. The second day I put on one of my Indian rigs to take part. There were Haitian “Indians” there too with great peacock feather headdresses and soft gauzy robes. I felt rather the ugly duckling in my few turkey feathers until I was asked to ride on a float representing a tourist yacht. The only “tourists” seemed to be boys in bathing trunks, each with a towel around his shoulders, who danced around the float. Actually it was a very old dump truck, the top “deck” above the cab being a wooden kitchen chair guyed with wires. As a guest I shared the top spot alternately with the “Teacher,” a husky Haitian with a gold G-string and a harem-type veil across his nose. He did a writhing bump and grind routine which would have wowed them on Times Square. When my turns came, I did my Indian dance on top of the wobbling chair. I was in the Legislature at the time and it flashed through my mind “If only my constituents could see me now.” There was an eight piece band aboard, mostly drums and a trumpet and whistle. All afternoon they banged away and swigged from a jug of homemade rum, which they passed often enough up to me. It looked the color of dirty dishwater but didn’t lack for alcohol. The day ended in a blinding thunderstorm, but we all went up to someone’s one room house to finish out the evening.

**INDIAN IN VIRGINIA.** That summer of 1957 Virginia celebrated its 350th anniversary. Byron Hatfield was in charge, first for the state and then for the federal government. I spent part of the summer and again in the fall with Byron and Cherry on their boat near Jamestown, acting the Indian chief at historical dramas in various towns. The social climax came when Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip were entertained at a garden party at the Governor’s Palace in Williamsburg. *Em* had seen enough pageants, but when the gold-printed invitation came to attend the garden party, she went flying around for the right clothes. She never could find a hat, but borrowed one from Adelaide
Hirsche. The hat was a little thing covered with green bird feathers. The Queen wore one almost like it.

In October there was the reenactment of the Battle of Yorktown with 3,000 soldiers and sailors taking the parts of the American, British and French troops. For the surrender scene Byron put me in for a touch of color. Afterward at the reception, a little old man asked me what was the authority for having an Indian present. I quickly made up the story that he was a favorite of Washington, and had guided the Americans through the wilderness from New York. My informee replied “Very interesting, very interesting.” I afterward found out that he was the State Historian. Thus is history often recorded.

FOREIGN STUDENTS. Beginning in 1959 we started having foreign students stay with us from a long weekend to all summer. There were boys and girls from Argentina, British Guiana, Germany, India, Japan, Liberia, Nicaragua and Turkey. Pierenrico “Pippo” Bonini from Torino stayed for the summer. He was a shy blond little fellow, whose brother was killed in a skiing accident while he was here. His parents waited until he got home to tell him. They did not want to spoil his summer in America. Bernard Ike. Afoeju was an Ibo from Nigeria. He spent a summer before going on to Yale with a State Department scholarship. They didn’t pay much beyond his board and room and tuition. We bought him winter clothes and bedding. He was told we were to be his family, and following the African custom, took it quite literally. He spent his summers with us until he graduated with honors. We always took the Africans when asked as they were a little harder to place.

As an aftermath of having our names on the State Department list of hosts, we were asked in 1966 to entertain Reuben and Solona Canoy, a Philippine couple on the way home from a round the world tour. His family ran a newspaper and television station in Manila. They asked especially to stay with a small town New England family, so we invited some of our Yankee friends to two dinners, where we gave the visitors the works. Afterward he sent us a copy of his column about their stay with us. “At the dinner table, the conversation may range from theater, to Picasso and Truman Capote’s latest work to De Gaulle and the Vietnam situation. But eventually it settles close to home, and then New England shuts out the intruder.” We had overdone the “quaint character” business.

TRAVEL. In the middle of February 1960 Island work was slack and both boys were in college, Louie a Junior at Yale and Rufus a Freshman at Penn. We took off for France, Italy and Germany for three months. I had my war locations to show Em, and she had read countless books on history and the arts. I can’t begin to say how excited and stimulated we were by the whole trip. In Rome one afternoon Em said “What’s the matter with me?” Jim: “What do you mean?” Em: “No one’s pinched my bottom.” Jim: “You walk like your schoolteacher stepmother.” That was one of my jokes. She had a very pinchable bottom.

That same summer Louie went to Europe with a student group, and was married after coming home to Cynthia Abell, daughter of the Russell Abell’s of West Hartford.
That winter Rufus dropped out of college and worked with me on the Island. He expected to be drafted, so thought he would get the whole thing over with as soon as he could and enlisted in the Army Engineers. He smashed his leg in a motorcycle accident in California, so didn’t go to Vietnam with his unit. Grandson Jimmie, my namesake, was born the next May 27. Liz, named for her great, great, great, great-grandmother Elizabeth (Stillman) Maxson, was born January 3, 1964.

Over the next few years Em and I took trips to the West Indies and the Mediterranean. It made her nervous because we were not saving up any money, but I assured, if not convinced, her that the Island property was looking more and more like a good investment, and that we had better go “while our hearts were young and gay.”

At Grenada we stayed at a little boarding house right on the beach. Early every morning right after sunrise some young boys would ride six or seven race horses down to exercise on the beach and then plunge into the water. The horses’ graceful muscular bodies splashing in the spray were an unforgettable sight. A couple of days later a young couple from the Midwest arrived. She was that thin washed-out type. One evening a husky young black boxer who worked at an open air auto repair shop up the beach came down in the glow of the tropical sunset to swim and exercise on the edge of the sand. Mrs. “Bible Belt” complained to me “I certainly didn’t come down here to see this sort of thing,” but she couldn’t keep her eyes off him. I couldn’t either—he had it all over the horses.

SOUTH PACIFIC. In the spring of 1967 I saw an ad in the Saturday Review of a “most unusual tour” to the Pacific Islands. Em told me I had better go by myself. She was not one for the tropics and jungle. Six of us, all strangers, took off for what turned
out to be the most exciting trip of my life. The high point was a "sing-sing" of aboriginal tribes in the highlands of New Guinea which the Australian government had arranged for the native head-hunters to meet socially before they were given independence, at the insistence of the U.N. A high plateau surrounded by even higher mountains was filled with about 35,000 of them. Each tribe had its own distinctive costume and marched as a group. Again I had along an Indian costume, more colorful than the one I took to Haiti, but I hesitated to wear it, not knowing how the natives would take it, and not knowing if I might "pollute" the purity of their culture. I need not have worried, they were fascinated. I was followed everywhere by 20 or 30 great fierce looking tribesmen, muscles gleaming with coconut oil and elaborate headdresses made of countless bird-of-paradise plumes. We wandered around staring at each other. When it came time to clear the field for the parade, an Australian policeman came up to me and said "Awl rite, Ryne-in-the-Fyce, if you get awf they’ll awl get awf."

On part of the trip we were lucky enough to have a young Dutch anthropologist along who had lived with some of the tribes and could talk to them. He was given permission to take our little group to islands which were off limits to tourists. While at Lae he learned of a small mountain tribe which had just been connected with "civilization" by a rough jeep road. That evening we went up to see their annual ceremony. The young men went out in the jungle to get ready. We were told that it was death to any woman who watched the preparations, so I took off my shirt so there would be no mistake and followed them. First they made a sticky paste with charcoal which they smeared all over each others bodies. When it dried, the little boys sprayed coconut oil all over them with their mouths so that the men gleamed like black ebony. The next step was to fasten on leggings of green strips of banana leaves, and paint their knees white. Their headdresses were of striking abstract design, developed without any contact with the outside world. To finish off, they each had a white six inch disk fastened at the center to a stick which was tied to the penis. When they came out to do their ritual dance to the music of the women's chorus and drums, the disks bounced up and down in the firelight. At the end of the dance each one in turn ran into the bed of red hot coals and stamped up and down for at least half a minute. I had always been dubious about stories of such "fire-walking" but saw for myself that their bare feet appeared unharmed.

Two years later I went back to New Guinea again, but "civilization" was already having its effect, and I found it was not so much fun without Em. No one else saw things the same way as I did. I have learned since that their "sing-sings" have become pretty much of a tourist show.

After that we took two trips to Britain to see all the places with literary associations, and stately homes and gardens. From the formal gardens I was inspired to lay out one at home to go with our Georgian-style house. After seeing the insipid statuary both there and around Paris, I resolved to do something with a little more character. Prevailing upon Andy Smith, a young neighbor, to be a model, I made a figure which I tried to give the feeling of an archaic Greek. It must have been an experience he could have passed up the first time I coated him with plaster to make a mold. In spite of a coat
of vaseline, it all stuck to him. After an overall shave, it went better the next time. Then
the dog tipped over and smashed my first working cast. Finally poured in concrete with a
bronze color finish, it is a satisfying work.

For many years I used to hire two or three young fellows for summer work, and
worked with them as long as I was up to it. One time there was a girl, but she had to
quit on account of "morning sickness." If I had limited my contacts to only my
contemporaries, I doubt if I would have maintained the open-mindedness and fresh
points of view I got from those boys. I owe them a lot.

SO FAR SO GOOD. My mind swirls with closing thoughts, but there is nothing
more needs be said. There used to be an old oak that stood by itself in an open pasture on
the mainland. After the hurricane swept down in windrows the trees that found insecure
shelter from each other in the woods, the old oak, unlike the other trees, stood on its
own strong roots. It is gone now, but it is the only one I remember.

Figure 39. Swamp Yankee from Mystic. (Photograph by Maurice C. LaGrua.)
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THE FAMILY

The people listed in the following table are my family; the number of the generation going back from myself is shown within brackets after each name: Daniel Abbott [10]. The name of a daughter who married into another branch of the family is indented in the first column; such as, Mary Abbott [8] who married Thomas Fenner III [8]. If more than one son was a direct family member; for example, James Avery, Jr. [9] and his brother John Avery [9], then each of these branches of the family follows a dotted line. When this branching occurs, the father’s name has been included in parentheses after each son’s name. A daughter who was previously married and widowed is listed by her maiden name, followed by the family name of her first husband; such as, Amy Borden (Thornton) [8] who was married to Thornton and after his death married Edward Fenner [8].

The second column lists the years of birth and death, if known; a question mark denotes an uncertain date. The third column shows the year of marriage to the family member in the fourth column. A question mark within parentheses ( ? ) signifies a name which is unknown. The spouses listed in column four are cross-referenced in column one which is alphabetical by last name. If the spelling of a name changed in a later generation, I have usually followed the earlier spelling: Minor (Miner) or Wiley (Wilie).

Only the names of the family members have been set in italics throughout the text.

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185
Steven Arnold, Jr. [8] 1654–1720 m. 1688 Mary Sheldon [8]
Mary Atherton [10] m. 1658 William Billings [10]
James Avery [10] 1620–1709 m. 1643 Joanna Greenslade [10]
Hannah Avery [9] 1644– m. 1666 Ephriam Minor [10]
James Avery, Jr. (s. James) [9] 1646–1728 m. 1669 Deborah Stallyon [9]
Deborah Avery [8] 1671–1739 m. 1691 Robert Allyn II [8]
Ebenezer Avery [8] 1678–1752 m. 1708 Dorothy Parke [8]
Joseph Swan Avery [5] 1787–1865 m. 1816 Mary Hudson (Avery) [5]
John Avery (s. James) [9] 1654– m. 1675 Abigail Chesebrough [9]
Mary Avery [8] 1680– m. 1698 William Denison II [9]
George Babcock [9] 1673–1751 m. 1694 Elizabeth Hall [9]
Mary Babcock [8] 1695– m. 1717 Thomas Potter, Jr. [8]
Ebenezer Billings [9] m. 1680 Anna Comstock [9]
Increase Billings [8] 1697– m. 1720 Hannah Hewitt [8]
Thomas Borden [10] –1676 m. 1664 Mary Harris [10]
Richard Borden II [9] m. ( ? )
Amy Borden (Thornton) [8] m. 1728 Edward Fenner [8]
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<td>James Garvie</td>
<td>[5]</td>
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<td>Matthew Grant</td>
<td>1661−1662</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Priscilla</td>
<td>[11]</td>
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<td>Samuel Grant</td>
<td>1663−1664</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Mary Porter</td>
<td>[10]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Josiah Grant</td>
<td>1665−1666</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Rebecca Minor</td>
<td>[9]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver Grant</td>
<td>1667−1668</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Bridget Minor</td>
<td>[8]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridget Grant</td>
<td>1669−1670</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Stephen Billings</td>
<td>[7]</td>
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<tr>
<td>( ? ) Greeley</td>
<td>1671−1672</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>William Minor</td>
<td>[16]</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Greenman</td>
<td>1673−1674</td>
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<td>( ? )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Greenman</td>
<td>1675−1676</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>[10]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1676−1677</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>[9]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Greenman III</td>
<td>1677−1678</td>
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<td>Sarah Clarke</td>
<td>[8]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abigail Greenman</td>
<td>1678−1679</td>
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<td>David Maxson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joanna Greenslade</td>
<td>1680−1681</td>
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<td>James Avery</td>
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<td>Rose Grinnel</td>
<td>1682−1683</td>
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<td>Anthony Paine</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Hall</td>
<td>1683−1684</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>[11]</td>
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<td>1685−1686</td>
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<td>George Babcock</td>
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<td>Joseph Hallet</td>
<td>1686−1687</td>
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<td>Elizabeth</td>
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<td>Lois Hallet</td>
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<td>1688−1689</td>
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<td>William Minor</td>
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<td>1689−1690</td>
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<td>Susanna</td>
<td>[11]</td>
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<td>Mary Harris</td>
<td>1690−1691</td>
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<td>Thomas Borden</td>
<td>[10]</td>
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<td>Name</td>
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<td>Thomas Hazard</td>
<td>1610–1680</td>
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<td>m. George Lawton [10]</td>
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<td>Robert Hempsted</td>
<td>-1655</td>
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<td>1647–</td>
<td>m. 1665 Robert Douglass [9]</td>
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<td>m. Thomas Minor [14]</td>
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<td>1662–</td>
<td>m. 1683 Mary (Marie) Fanning [9]</td>
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<td>Hannah Hewitt</td>
<td>1701–</td>
<td>m. 1720 Increase Billings [8]</td>
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<td>Henrietta Hicks</td>
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<td>m. Henry Minor, Jr. [17]</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td>m. ( ? )</td>
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<td>Margery Hill</td>
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<td>m. 1640 James Morgan [10]</td>
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<td>-1662</td>
<td>m. Sarah ( ? )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Hinkley</td>
<td>1628–1686</td>
<td>m. 1649 Henry Cobb [9]</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Hislop</td>
<td>1847–1908</td>
<td>m. 1874 Annie Marion Brown [3]</td>
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<td>1880–1953</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Hubbard</td>
<td></td>
<td>m. ( ? )</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>James Hubbard</td>
<td></td>
<td>m. ( ? )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel Hubbard</td>
<td>1610–1689</td>
<td>m. 1636 Tacy Cooper [11]</td>
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<td>Bethia Hubbard</td>
<td>1646–1707</td>
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<td>Ruth Hubbard</td>
<td>1640–1691</td>
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<td>John Hudson</td>
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<td>Phineas Hudson</td>
<td>1763–1811</td>
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<td>Mary Hudson (Avery)</td>
<td>1788–1855</td>
<td>m. 1816 Joseph Swan Avery [5]</td>
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<td>Samuel Hurlbutt</td>
<td>1649–</td>
<td>m. Mary ( ? )</td>
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<td>Stephen Hurlbutt</td>
<td>1668–1742</td>
<td>m. 1696 Hannah Douglass [8]</td>
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<td>( ? ) Hurlbutt</td>
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<td>m. ( ? )</td>
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<td>m. 1763 Shapley Morgan [6]</td>
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<td>Rose Kerrich (Kerridge)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Larkin</td>
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<td>m. Richard Stevens [10]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cary Latham</td>
<td>-1685</td>
<td>m. 1638? Elizabeth Masters (Lockwood) [10]</td>
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<td>Joseph Latham</td>
<td>1642–</td>
<td>m. ( ? )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jasper Latham</td>
<td>1680–1752</td>
<td>m. Abigail ( ? )</td>
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<td>Mary Latham</td>
<td>1716–1773</td>
<td>m. 1735 Parke Avery [7]</td>
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190
Nathaniel Masters [12] m. (? ?)
John Masters [11] m. (? ?)
Elizabeth Masters (Lockwood) [10] m. 1638? Cary Catham [10]
Thomas Mattle [11] -1670 m. (? ?)
John Maxson, Jr. (s. John) [9] 1667-1748 m. 1688 Judith Clarke [9]
Bethia Maxson [8] 1693- m. 1715 Joseph Maxson, Jr. [8]
John Maxson III [8] 1701- m. 1724 Thankful Randall [8]
Mary Maxson [8] m. 1739 Joseph Stillman [8]
Joseph Maxson, Jr. [8] 1692- m. 1715 Bethia Maxson [8]
Henry Minor [18] -1359 m. (? ?)
Henry Minor, Jr. [17] m. Henrietta Hicks [17]
William Minor [16] m. (? ?) Gleeley [16]
Thomas Minor [14] m. Bridget Hervie [14]
Ephriam Minor [10] 1642- m. 1666 Hannah Avery [9]
Rebecca Minor [9] 1672- m. 1696 Josiah Grant [9]
Bridget Minor [8] 1705- m. 1726 Oliver Grant [8]

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth - Death</th>
<th>Marriage Year</th>
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<td>Anthony Paine [12]</td>
<td>–1650</td>
<td>m. 1643</td>
<td>Rose Grinnel (widow) [12]</td>
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<td>Dorothy Parke [8]</td>
<td>–1732</td>
<td>m. 1708</td>
<td>Ebenezer Avery [8]</td>
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<td>Christian Peake [10]</td>
<td>1583–</td>
<td>m. ?</td>
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<td>1669–1746</td>
<td>m. ?</td>
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<td>m. 1672</td>
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<td>Mary Porter or Potter [10]</td>
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<td>Samuel Grant [10]</td>
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<td>1696–1773</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Year 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Randall</td>
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<td>1685</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1685</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Randall II</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>1724</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew Randall</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>1724</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thankful Randall</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>193</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Sabin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobias Saunders</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Saunders</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>193</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>m.</td>
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<td>Ruth Shapley</td>
<td>m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Sheldon</td>
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<td>Rebecca Short</td>
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<td>m.</td>
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<td>m.</td>
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<td>m.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Esther Stillman</td>
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John Swan [9] 1668–1743 m. 1699 Susannah Eastman (Wood) [9]
John Swan, Jr. [8] 1700– m. 1726 Lucy Denison [8]
Alice Tripp [10] 1650– m. 1671 William Hall, Jr. [10]
Margaret Walling (White) [9] –1717 m. 1678 Daniel Abbott, Jr. [9]